A Little Maid of Nantucket

ALICE TURNER CURTIS

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"She's a Smuggler!"

A Little Maid of Nantucket

BY
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"Yankee Girl Civil War Stories"

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A Little Maid of Nantucket

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"A Little Maid of Nantucket"

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CHAPTER I

THREE LITTLE GIRLS

Prissie Fowler opened the wicket gate and started down the lane that led to the main street of the town. It was a morning in late April and, as her mother had just said, warm for the season. Dandelions were in blossom, and at the edge of the pine woods close down among the mosses the arbutus had been in bloom since March, and the soft breeze that rumpled Prissie's yellow hair and lifted the silver-like leaves of the tall poplar trees near the gate brought a pleasant fragrance of moors and sea.

Looking down the lane Prissie could see the blue waters of Nantucket harbor, and beyond the long sand-bars the deeper blue of Nantucket Sound. Several small fishing vessels were headed toward the harbor mouth, and the little girl's gaze followed one of these with anxious thoughts.

as she stopped on the slope of the hill before turning into the main street toward the shop of Miriam Coffin, where she had been sent on an errand.

"Father's boat will be the first to pass Brant Point," she said aloud, as she watched one of the larger craft draw ahead of the others.

"So it will, little maid!" declared a rough voice so close beside her that Priscilla gave a startled exclamation and turned quickly to find Captain Swain smiling and nodding as he added:

"But the faster the pace the greater the danger, Priscilla. Dost thou forget that this is 1779 and England and America are at war? 'Tis not a fortnight since that our stores and wharves were plundered by armed men. The townspeople are defenceless against these British craft. But there! What does a little maid of less than a dozen years know of such things?" he ended, smiling down at Priscilla's troubled face.

"But, if you please, Captain Swain, I do know that we are beset with trouble. My mother said so this very morning. We are sailing close to the wind for bread, and corn is three dollars a bushel and hard to get; and I am bound for Mistress Coffin's to see how much sugar I can

buy for this shilling," and she opened her tightly closed hand to show a shining piece of silver.

"Well! Well! Sugar is to be had at Miriam's if thou hast the price," said Captain Swain, and, noticing the little girl's sober look, added: "Thy father is a good sailor, and his boat a swift craft; the enemy will not overhaul him. Thou needst not fear," and, with another friendly nod, saying he must "cruise along to the wharf," he bade Priscilla good-bye. She quickened her pace, remembering that her mother had bade her not to linger, and to return home as soon as possible. But at Mistress Coffin's door, just as she was about to enter she heard someone call her name. She turned to find Judy Coleman running along the street, her black curls blowing about her flushed face and her dark eyes shining with excitement.

"Prissie! Prissie Fowler! Wait! Don't go in to Mistress Coffin's! Wait!" panted Judy, as, nearly out of breath, she clasped Priscilla's arm and whispered: "She's a smuggler. Truly she is! And all those fine things in her house are brought by British boats and landed at Quaise. 'Tis well known that she is friendly with the British, Prissie. Thou must not go to her house."

As she talked Judy was drawing Prissie along beside her to the street. "And but yesterday I overheard two sailormen saying that any day the town might be sacked and burned, but that Mistress Coffin's property would not be harmed because of aid she gave the enemy."

"Judy! Whatever started this war against us?" questioned Prissie, who was sure that Judy Coleman, who would be twelve her next birthday while Prissie was not yet eleven, could answer any question she might ask.

"'Tis a just war for America," declared Judy. "My father says the American colonies could do naught else but resist injury and injustice; and he says England is already conquered, but that Nantucket has no protection from either side. Dost thou not wish we were on the mainland, Prissie?"

Priscilla's blue eyes deepened and shone as she faced Judy:

"I never heard the like, Judy Coleman! Mainland! You well know 'tis not to be compared to Nantucket. Have you not heard many a captain who has sailed to far ports say that Sherburne is the finest of them all?"

Judy shook her dark head laughingly. "I

but asked thee a question, Prissie. *I* would well like to be on the mainland where the American army would defend me. There is no protection for an island with sea as far as one can look!" and both the girls turned to gaze out across the harbor, forgetting for the moment all the dangers of war, and even the adventurous smuggling of Mistress Miriam Coffin as, almost unconsciously, they realized all the beauty of their island home.

"I must waste no more time!" Prissie announced. "My mother bade me to do my errand and hurry home;" and she turned back toward Mistress Coffin's big house, that but a few years earlier had been admired by all the town of Sherburne.

"Thou dost not mean to go there after what I have told thee, Priscilla Fowler?" exclaimed Judy, stamping her foot in a manner much out of keeping with her meek "thee's" and "thou's."

Priscilla nodded soberly. "Of course, Judy. I must do my errand and obey my mother. Mistress Coffin's affairs are naught to me."

"Then thou art no better than a traitor and a smuggler thyself, Priscilla Fowler. And I'll have no more to do with thee! I hope the British

will capture thy father's boat and send him to their prison ships as a lesson to thee, thou *Tory!*" and with a scornful look at the astonished Priscilla Judy turned and raced through a lane leading to her own home.

Priscilla stood for a moment gazing after the little whirlwind, and then trudged steadily back to the doorway from which Judy had so firmly led her. Her rap was quickly answered, and securing the small package of sugar for which her shilling would pay, she hurried up the lane toward her home.

"No better than a smuggler and a traitor; and she hoped my father's boat would be captured and Father sent to a British prison ship. That's what she said. Judy Coleman is a hateful girl, and she will not again get a chance to say such things to me," thought Priscilla as she came near the tall poplars that guarded the gate of her home.

Priscilla well knew all the dangers that attended the brave sailors of Nantucket during the years of the American Revolution. The war having put an end to the whaling industry, the men now turned to fishing near the island, and a number of enterprising citizens established salt

works east of the town, sending it to the West Indies and bringing home molasses, sugar and other West India goods. But all these venturings were full of peril. British cruisers thronged the coast, and the Nantucket vessels stood little chance to escape capture. Their crews were sent to the prison-ships that the British established in Rhode Island and New York, in which thousands of American seamen were pent up, and where many perished.

It was small wonder that Priscilla felt Judy cruel indeed to wish such a fate upon Captain Joel Fowler; and all her delight in the soft spring air, the blue sky and sea was forgotten as she entered her mother's kitchen and put down the package of sugar on the kitchen table that stood between the two eastern windows.

Mrs. Fowler's spinning-wheel stood on the further side of the room, and she was now stepping back and forth drawing out the coils of white wool into a smooth yarn which later on would be woven into cloth or knit into stockings; for wool was easy to procure from the thousands of sheep owned on Nantucket Island. Flax was easily raised, so that while food was becoming difficult to secure, clothing of a neat and durable

kind, for all who were inclined to labor, was provided.

"Here, Prissie, just take my place a few minutes. Watch the wool that the thread may run evenly," said Mrs. Fowler, as her little girl entered the room, and Priscilla was only too eager to obey. While her mother hurried to the oven to make sure that the Indian pudding was not bubbling over the edges of the thick baking-dish, Prissie took her place at the spinning-wheel and stepped briskly back and forth as the white woolly roll spun out into smooth thread.

Prissie for a moment forgot her unhappy encounter with Judy Coleman, and just as her mother came smilingly to resume the spinning they heard the latch of the wicket-gate swing shut, and quick steps running up the path. A moment later a little figure in a dress of brown homespun and wearing a sunbonnet of brown gingham stood in the open doorway smiling radiantly as if sure of a welcome, and Prissie exclaimed:

"Oh! It's Debby Swain! Come in, Debby. I saw your grandfather not an hour ago, bound for the wharves."

Debby made a little curtsey to Mrs. Fowler who welcomed her smilingly. "May not Prissie go with me after May-flowers?" she asked; "they'll be gone come Sunday, and the moors are pink with them to-day."

Prissie looked eagerly toward her mother, hoping she would agree. Debby Swain, whose father had been lost at sea, lived with her grandfather, and although she was two years younger than Priscilla the two girls were the best of playmates. Prissie often thought that she liked Debby Swain better than any other girl, and to go off to the moors with Debby would be the most pleasant amusement possible.

"I have a bit of luncheon in this basket," added Debby. "My grandmother said if Prissie could go with me there would be enough for us both."

"Well, I can spare Prissie to-day," said Mrs. Fowler, "but do not wander too far, nor had you best go too near the outer shore."

Both the girls promised to be careful, and in a few moments they were happily starting off, talking eagerly of the places where the fragrant arbutus was sure to be found in masses of pink and white blossoms.

Prissie had now forgotten all Judy's gloomy

conversation and unkind words. "We'll eat our lunch on the bluffs where we can look straight out at sea, will we not, Prissie?" said Debby, and Priscilla joyfully agreed. She was conscious, too, of being well pleased that Debby had provided the luncheon, for Mrs. Cap'n Swain was known to have a goodly store of guava jelly, brought home by Captain Swain from the West Indies. It was rumored that their cellar and cupboards were far better filled than those of the other families in Sherburne, since the British now captured so many of the Nantucket vessels that few cargoes reached the island town. So Prissie was confident that Debby's grandmother had put some dainty in that basket that Debby swung so carelessly.

CHAPTER II

NICKANOOSE

Prissie and Debby were hardly out of the yard before Debby set down her basket, untied the strings of her brown gingham sunbonnet and pulled it off.

"There!" she exclaimed with a long breath of satisfaction, as she folded it over the top of her basket, "now I can breathe; and I can look around on each side without feeling all fenced in. Do you not hate sunbonnets, Prissie?"

"I do indeed!" declared Prissie, who had instantly followed Debby's example, and whose sunbonnet of faded blue checked cotton now swung by its strings over her arm, "and I love the wind in my hair. I went bareheaded to Mistress Coffin's shop this very morning."

As the two girls talked they were walking toward the pasture lands that lay toward the south, and in a short time had passed the limits of the town and were out on the moors following one of the paths that led to the south shore. Now and then they would run from the path to ad-

mire and exclaim over some unexpected wild flower; twice they hushed their voices and tiptoed cautiously, searching for the nest of a pair of ground-sparrows that with soft notes and frightened calls had fluttered up from among the grasses and low-growing pines. A flock of bluebirds, like bits of the April sky, flew over their heads and vanished; a wren's happy note sounded clearly from thickly-growing weeds at the edge of the path, and from a small pond not far away they could hear the quack, quack, of the wild ducks.

From the pasture lands came the distant calls of sheep; but the little girls felt as if all these pleasant sounds and sights were as natural a part of the April day as was the sunshine and fragrant wind.

"There'll be a fine surf coming up on the south shore," said Prissie, as they stopped near a little growth of scrubby pine trees, "and the bluffs are not much farther on. 'Twould be a great sight to watch the big waves come rolling in and see the spray go up, up, up into the air."

"Let's go to the bluffs and eat our lunch there," suggested Debby, "then on our way home we can fill our empty basket with flowers."

Prissie was well pleased to agree, and after a few minutes' rest the two girls walked on and soon were nearing the high bluffs of sand that face the Atlantic. The soft breeze of the early morning had strengthened and now swept against them so that their hair blew straight back from their faces, and their thin skirts whipped about them.

"'Tis like beating out-of-harbor with a head-wind," Prissie shouted, for the wind carried their voices back over the moors.

Debby smiled and nodded in response. Both the girls thought it the best of sport to struggle on. Now and then they would stop and turn their backs to the ocean that stretched off to the far horizon, get their breath and struggle on until at last on the very brow of a high cliff they flung themselves down among the scrubby little shrubs in a little hollow that gave them shelter from the sweeping April wind, and looking at each other's flushed face and rumpled hair Debby and Prissie laughed delightedly.

"Wasn't it fun!" Debby exclaimed. "And I am hungry enough to eat luncheon this very minute."

"So am I," responded Prissie, and at this the

girls laughed as if being hungry was the best joke possible. As indeed it was with Grandma Swain's well-filled basket of delicacies at hand.

"Guess what's in it," said Debby, as she started to lift the cover; but Prissie shook her head.

"How could I ever guess, when 'tis well known that your grandma's cupboards are filled with goodies. But maybe there's a taste of jelly," she said hopefully.

Debby's round face beamed with pleasure at the thought that she was about to offer Prissie a real treat; for she had watched her grandmother cut two slices of bread and spread them liberally with freshly churned butter; she had seen her place two hard-boiled eggs in the basket, and, best of all, a small round wooden box that held the smooth, delightfully flavored guava jelly that Captain Swain had brought home from the West Indies. Then, too, there was a bottle of milk, and Debby was sure that Prissie would think such a luncheon a feast. She had lifted the cover of the basket, but her expression of delight and expectation changed suddenly to surprise and dismay.

"Oh!" she whispered. "If I haven't brought the wrong basket!"

"Whatever is the matter, Debby? Do not mind if your grandma has only given us corn bread; 'twas wrong of me to be thinking of jelly when food is so hard to get. A bit of corn bread will be good eating. I am hungry enough to eat raw clams," and Prissie chuckled at the idea; for in those days the people of Nantucket Island regarded clams as a food to be eaten only when all else failed, and most of the children, even, could repeat an old rhyme:

> "First a feast, and then a famine,
> And then out on the flats a-clammin'——"

that meant the last resource as to food.

"Oh, it's dreadful! Whatever will my grandma say! Oh, Prissie!" and Debby's blue eyes were wide with disappointment, and her lips quivered as she faced Prissie's eager, questioning look.

"Whatever is the matter?" repeated Prissie. "If you have broken a glass or lost a spoon, Debby, say so; for you look as if you were anchored in the doldrums."

"Look!" responded Debby, holding the open

basket toward Prissie, " instead of the fine lunch Grandma put up for us I've lugged her egg basket way over here."

And now it was Prissie's turn to look and feel dismayed as she peered into the basket where a dozen or more big brown eggs rested safely; but before she could speak Debby was explaining how this woeful mistake had happened.

" Both baskets, and they are exactly alike, stood on the kitchen table, Prissie; and I took this one because it was nearest. Oh, dear! And Grandma had just said she meant to take the eggs to the store and exchange them for dried peas."

Suddenly Prissie began to laugh, and as Debby's look of sorrow and surprise deepened into disapproval Prissie's laughter became even more uncontrollable, and she covered her face with both hands as Debby exclaimed reproachfully:

" 'Tis nothing to be merry about. My grandmother will be ill pleased with me, and besides that I'm hungry."

" Oh, Debby! I'm hungry, too. But I was thinking of your grandma going down to Hussey's store and saying: ' I have fetched down a

few eggs to trade for dry peas, Cap'n Hussey,' and then she'd open the basket. Oh, Debby!" and Priscilla began to laugh again and now Debby laughed with her. For a moment they forgot their hunger, but they both agreed that they were not hungry enough to eat raw eggs.

"What will we do now?" asked Debby, but before Prissie could speak a rustle in the dead grass near them and the crackle of broken twigs made them both turn in that direction.

"It's an Indian," Prissie whispered. "I presume likely he's been there all the time," and jumping up the little girl sent a sharp glance in the direction from which the noise had come. Instantly a crouching figure rose to its feet so near to the little girls that Prissie could almost touch him.

"Nickanoose takin' sleep," the Indian explained, "an' you wake him up!" he added accusingly, his bead-like eyes fixing themselves on the basket.

Neither of the girls was afraid of the Indian; many Indians lived in different parts of Nantucket Island and took a part in the industries of the town, and were useful in the whaling business. This Nickanoose, who now confronted

Debby and Priscilla, was a descendant of one of the head Sachems of Nantucket from whom Thomas Mayhew, Tristram Coffin, Thomas Macy and others had secured control of the greater part of the island in 1660. The family of Nickanoose had always been friendly to the English, and recently there had been many rumors that this Indian was in the employ of Mistress Coffin and an ally of the Tories. As Prissie looked at him she suddenly recalled all that Judy Coleman had told her that very morning. She wondered if Nickanoose was not lurking on this outer cliff to watch for some British cruiser, or even perhaps to signal an enemy that a fleet of fishing boats had that morning sailed from Nantucket harbor, and with this favoring wind could easily be overtaken and captured. Not far from where Nickanoose was standing a large spar was firmly fixed in the sandy soil of the bluff; cleats were fastened to it by which it was possible to climb to the top, and Prissie knew that whalemen and fishermen often climbed to the top of this spar to watch for the whales that, in early days, could be seen at a considerable distance from land. As her glance went from the Indian to the top of the spar she was sure that Nickanoose was on

the bluff for the very reason she had suspected: to signal the enemy's craft that were so constantly cruising in those waters; for from the top of the pole a number of white streamers floated in the wind.

Prissie had entirely forgotten that she was hungry; in another instant she would have pointed to the streamers and demanded that Nickanoose should explain how they came there, but Debby's eager exclamation made her turn quickly.

"Oh, Nickanoose! 'Tis good fortune for us that we discovered you, for see!" and Debby held out the basket toward the Indian. "I thought I had a basket of food, and by mistake I have brought my grandmother's basket of eggs; and we are so hungry and have nothing to eat. Can you not make us a fire and tell us how to cook some of these eggs?" and Debby smiled hopefully at her own clever suggestion as she looked up at the dark face.

The Indian grunted as if a little puzzled, then he nodded and reached his hand toward the basket.

"Nickanoose make fire on shore; too much wind here," he said and turned toward a slope

of the sandy bluff down which it was possible to make a sliding descent to the beach.

"Come, Prissie! Nickanoose will cook for us. Maybe you can get us a fish, too?" said Debby eagerly, running along beside the Indian. "A fine baked fish would be good, would it not? Do you think you can catch a cod, or even a small haddock, and bake it for us?" she questioned.

"Maybe catch fish," Nickanoose agreed, not ill pleased by Debby's confidence in him, and by the prospect of an unexpected meal.

Both Debby and the Indian were so occupied in making their cautious descent down the steep sandy bluff, and both taking it for granted Prissie was scrambling down behind them, that they did not miss her until they reached the shore; then Debby turned expecting to find her friend close beside her. But Prissie was not on the shore, nor was she to be seen on the sandy bluff down which Debby had slipped and slid with such delight. But for a moment this did not trouble either Debby or Nickanoose.

"Prissie will be here in a jiffy," Debby announced. "Where will you make the fire, Nickanoose?"

"Make fire down by rocks!" answered the

Indian, striding down the beach; and Debby, sure that Priscilla would catch them up in a few minutes, ran happily along the shore beside him asking where he would catch the fish and how he would manage to bake it.

CHAPTER III

ON THE SOUTH SHORE

As Debby and Nickanoose turned toward the shore, Priscilla instantly crouched low in the little hollow so that if they chanced to look back before beginning the descent of the sand bluff she could not be seen, and as soon as they were well down the slope she was on her feet and sped toward the tall "lookout" from which the stout streamers of sail-cloth flapped in the wind.

At the foot of the spar Prissie turned and sent an anxious glance seaward. A large sloop, such as Nantucket fishermen had learned to fear as one of the craft armed and manned by the British for the capture of American vessels, was sailing steadily along before the favoring wind, and not far behind it to windward a larger vessel kept it company.

"There they are! British cruisers; and Nickanoose *was* on the watch for them. Those streamers are the signal to tell them of our fishing boats. And with this wind 'twill not take long to overhaul them and Father will be carried

off a prisoner unless I can get those streamers down before they are sure of the signal. I must! I must!" and Prissie grasped at the first cleat, a strip of stout wood nailed firmly to the spar, and giving a foothold from which a man could easily reach the next cleat and so climb steadily upward.

But while this would be an easy matter for a Nantucket sailor, trained from boyhood to climb spars and cling to swaying ropes, or to the alert Indians skilled in all bodily exercises, it proved to be a difficult matter for a little girl not yet twelve years old. While she could easily reach the cleat with her hands and could draw herself up so that her feet would rest on it, the next cleat would be beyond her reach.

But she did not hesitate. Only a week earlier news had reached Sherburne of the death of two Nantucket men whose boat had been captured, almost within sight of the island, and who had perished in one of the prison-ships of the enemy; and the thought that a like fate might befall her own father unless she could destroy the signals urged Prissie not to think of the difficulties before her.

Balancing herself on the first cleat and hold-

ing fast to the spar she looked up to the next foothold. Clinging tightly to the rough pole, digging her heels against it, and forcing herself steadily upward she clutched the second cleat with a long breath of triumph.

"That was the hardest," she said, for the upper cleats proved to be much closer together; and, as the wind swept against her, Prissie quickly realized that had this not been so she could not have reached the top of the spar. Only by holding on with all her strength could she keep her hold as she went slowly up.

"However can I get those streamers clear?" she thought as she found herself within reach of them. To hold herself securely and to untie those closely knotted strips of sail-cloth was no easy matter against the buffeting wind.

"I must!" she half sobbed. A flashing memory of all the sufferings of hunger, thirst and abuse inflicted on such American prisoners as survived from their confinement in the dreaded British prison-ships urged her to forget her own danger, and holding tightly, with her left arm about the spar, she reached out and tugged at the ends of the streamers. But they were securely knotted, and with a desperate grasp Prissie drew

them all in toward her, holding them in a huddled mass close to the pole.

"You can't wave out now, anyway," she thought triumphantly, forgetting that her own fluttering skirts could be seen through the spy-glasses that were no doubt at that moment pointed toward the bluffs from both the English cruisers.

Battling with the flapping strips of canvas, Priscilla gave no glance seaward or she would have seen that the big sloop had changed its course and was now headed directly toward shore, to a stretch of beach beyond the bluff where a landing could be made.

Driving before the wind it was but a short time before the sloop came to not far from the shore; and a small boat, with two sailors at the oars and a young officer steering, shot through the breakers and made a landing in the lee of the bluff, beyond which, well out of sight, Nickanoose was skilfully tending his fire while Debby searched the shore for bits of wood to feed it, thinking what a grand surprise it would be for Prissie to find a baked fish and eggs all ready to eat.

"If I need help I'll call," said the young of-

ficer as he sprang from the boat and rapidly made his way toward the signal pole, leaving the two sailors to wonder what strange meaning that mass of fluttering cloth from the tall pole might indicate.

At the foot of the spar the young officer stopped in amazement, as he looked up and discovered a girl perched on the top, her short yellow hair swept back from her face, her dress fluttering like a flag in the wind as she struggled to hold tight a number of canvas strips!

"If I call she'll come tumbling down and break her neck," thought the young man; "but I must find out what this means. The signals were set fair for us to net a good school of Nantucket boats. But that girl is trying to pull them down. I must find out what's happened," and in an instant he was making his way up the spar.

Silently as he came Prissie was conscious of his approach and sent a fearful glance downward to see only an anxious upturned face.

"Hurry," she called down to him, sure that he must be a friend.

"I can't get this signal down, and my arms ache."

Almost before she had finished speaking the

young man was within reach of her. "Let go the canvas and hold tight to the spar," he commanded, and Prissie was only too glad to obey. The young officer, confident that this girl had been sent to pull down the signals because they might mean a danger to the English boats, drew his clasp knife and with a few quick strokes freed the fluttering strips of canvas that the wind instantly seized and sent whirling off across the moor.

"I don't believe I can get down!" declared Priscilla, clinging closely to the pole and not daring even to venture a glance at this stranger who had so swiftly disposed of Nickanoose's signals.

"I don't see however in the world you got up here. I'll take you down all right," he responded. "Just keep still, and when I have you fast let go the spar," and his left arm clasped her securely as he spoke, and an instant later at his, "Let go!" Prissie's aching arms released their grasp and before she could even think of what might have befallen her had help not come she was safely standing at the foot of the spar.

"Oh! It's lucky you saw me and came to help!" she exclaimed looking up at the young

man. "I couldn't have held those signals much longer, and they had to come down."

"What for? Who sent you? Did not the boats leave harbor? What's happened?" questioned the stranger, his keen glance fixed on this little girl at whose courage he was wondering. "Whoever sent a little maid like you on such a task?" he continued before Priscilla could answer his first question. "'Tis a wonder you did not lose your hold and fall. Tell me now; what's happened? I must be back to my boat."

"'Boat'?" repeated Priscilla, and adding, "I do not know what has happened, only that ——"

"I see! I see!" he interrupted. "You were not told the reason. Mistress Coffin is a careful woman. Well, I must be off. We'll have to cruise further out and wait for favoring news. But tell me your name, little maid? You have good courage," and he smiled down at her in so friendly a way that Prissie could but smile in response.

"My name is Priscilla Fowler," she answered.

"And mine is Geoffrey Burke. Lieutenant Geoffrey Burke, of the good sloop *Magic*. Maybe we'll meet again," he said, and before Priscilla could say another word he had turned toward

the shore and disappeared over the edge of the bluff. At that instant a voice, seeming to rise from the very ground where she was standing, made Prissie jump backwards.

"Tory! Tory! Tory!" it called, and from the tall grass rose a small figure and with pointed finger confronted the puzzled Priscilla and repeated: "Tory! So this was thy errand this morning to Mistress Coffin's, to get a message for the English cruisers. I watched thee climb the pole, Priscilla Fowler; and I saw the English sloop change its course; and I heard the English officer speak to thee of Mistress Coffin and praise thee for thy courage. 'Tis no use to deny it!" and Judy Coleman's dark eyes shone triumphantly as she gazed at Priscilla.

It was Debby's appearance that now prevented Priscilla from replying.

"Oh, Prissie! Why didn't you come to the shore? Come now, quickly. The fish is cooked to a turn! Oh, Judy! Why, 'tis really like a picnic! And you are just in time for dinner," Debby added, well pleased that Judy should have so unexpectedly appeared.

"I'll know who to tell of thy actions, Miss Tory," Judy whispered to Prissie; and without

even a word in response to Debby's friendly invitation Judy sped off toward the path leading back to Sherburne, leaving Priscilla and Debby to stare after her in amazement.

"Whatever is the matter with Judy?" gasped Debby. "But hurry, Prissie, Nickanoose will not wait. The fish is steaming from the hot sand. Oh, Prissie, instead of playing with Judy you should have come to the shore! Nickanoose built a great fire, and when the sand was hot he scraped the fire to another place and dug a hole in the hot sand and wrapped the fish in rockweed and heaped hot sand over it; then he scraped the hot coals on top of the sand. 'Twill taste fine."

As Debby talked she was drawing Prissie down the slope. As they rounded the little point, behind which Nickanoose had caught the fish and built the fire, Prissie saw the Indian squatting on the beach looking seaward, and her glance followed his and saw the big English sloop as it drew out from shore and headed westward. Nickanoose stared after it wonderingly; that was not the course indicated by the white signals he had fastened to the lookout spar; and it was not until Debby had twice called his name that the

Indian, with a puzzled grunt, turned to take away the rockweed from the well-cooked fish.

Priscilla was so hungry that for the moment she almost forgot all that had happened on the top of the cliff. Not until she and Debby had eaten a large portion of fish and two eggs each, and when Debby, for the twentieth time, had exclaimed that it was the best dinner she had ever tasted, did Prissie recall Judy Coleman's accusations and threats; and at the same time both girls realized that Nickanoose had vanished.

"And he has taken Grandmother's basket and the rest of the eggs!" wailed Debby, as a careful search failed to discover the missing basket.

But the loss of eggs and basket seemed a small matter to Priscilla. Judy's threat of proclaiming her as a Tory messenger for Mistress Coffin now filled her thoughts. She well knew that Nantucket could not receive any protection from America, and that the inhabitants were in constant fear of the English cruisers that from time to time plundered the stores and wharves of Sherburne; and that year, 1779, the people were in constant fear of attacks from the enemy.

If they had observed a strict neutrality, being equally friendly alike to British and American,

the British commander-in-chief would have seen to it that they received protection; but, although they knew that they could not expect any protection from the American government, many of the citizens of Nantucket were loyal to the cause of American liberty, and the word "Tory" was spoken scornfully.

If Judy Coleman carried out her threat to accuse Priscilla of being a Tory messenger, giving news to the English cruisers of the time when Nantucket boats put to sea, the little girl well knew that she would have serious trouble in proving her innocence, and that she had been trying to defeat, instead of help, the enemies of her island home.

CHAPTER IV

A FOGGY NIGHT

THE April afternoon was drawing toward sunset when Debby and Priscilla reached home. They had talked but little as they crossed the moors, nor did they stop to gather flowers. Debby now and then exclaimed mournfully that she knew not what her grandmother would say to her, and if she was conscious of Priscilla's silence believed it to be for the same reason as her own.

But Prissie's troubled thoughts centered on Judy Coleman. "I must see Judy this very night and tell her just what happened. She ought to know that I'd not help the cruisers to capture Nantucket men," thought Prissie with a puzzled sense of Judy's injustice toward her.

"Prissie, will you come over to-morrow?" asked Debby, as the two girls parted at Prissie's gate.

"Maybe, Debby. I can't promise sure!" said Prissie, and, with a parting nod, she ran up the

path to the door where her mother stood awaiting her.

"Well, child! You and Debby have surely made a long day of it. Oh, Prissie! If you have lost another sunbonnet I know not what I will say!" declared Mrs. Fowler, as her glance rested on Priscilla's rumpled hair.

Prissie touched her roughened locks a little wonderingly. "Whatever did I do with it?" she said, and quickly added: "But 'twas hardly fit to wear! You said so yourself, Mother! And so many things happened," she continued eagerly.

"A sunbonnet is a sunbonnet, Priscilla," Mrs. Fowler gravely replied. "Your father braves many a peril to provide us with all we have. I would not have you grow up heedless and selfish."

"Oh, Mother! I'd like well never to have another sunbonnet," and, with a little sigh, Priscilla said:

"We didn't have a good time at all! Whatever do you think! Debby made a mistake and brought the wrong basket. She brought Mrs. Swain's egg basket!" and recalling Debby's look of surprise on discovering what the basket contained a smile crept over Prissie's sober face.

"And you haven't had a bite to eat all this long day? You poor children!" exclaimed Mrs. Fowler before Prissie could go on with her story. "Fill the basin with warm water, dear, and scrub your face and hands, and brush your hair, and by that time I'll have some chowder warmed up for you. Father will not be in 'til late if this head-wind holds."

"We had a fine baked fish and eggs, Mother! The Indian Nickanoose cooked them for us. Then, before we knew it, he put off with Debby's basket! And, oh, Mother ——"

In another moment Prissie would have been in the midst of her story about the signals, the English boats, and all that had so quickly followed her resolve to climb the lookout; but before she could say another word a small boy had entered the kitchen, and was eagerly telling his errand.

"If you please, Mistress Fowler, will you not come as fast as you can? My mother has spilled a kettle of scalding water over her feet and can hardly bear it! Oh, please hurry," and young Peleg Griffith's grey eyes looked as if tears were very near.

"Why, to be sure! I'll be there in no time, Peleg," Mrs. Fowler assured him, and Peleg dis-

appeared almost before she had promised. With a hurried warning to Prissie not to let the chowder over the fire burn, Mrs. Fowler started after Peleg.

The island people were dependent on each other for prompt assistance in time of trouble. In 1779 there was not a doctor on Nantucket Island, but many of the women were skilled in the use of herbs and roots as medicines, and they were always ready to help their neighbors, both as nurses and physicians, when called on. Prissie knew that her mother would not return home until she had made Mrs. Griffith as comfortable as possible, and would perhaps even stay to put the younger children to bed before returning home. At this thought Prissie was instantly out of the rocking-chair and running toward the door.

"I'll be off and see Judy Coleman this minute," she decided. "She surely cannot have told her false story as soon as this; and when she knows the truth, that I climbed the lookout to pull down the signals, she will surely believe that I am no friend to those who would make my father a prisoner," thought Prissie, as, forgetting the kettle of chowder that was heating over the

fire, she opened the kitchen door and started down the lane.

The wind had now died away; a fog from the southward was creeping over the island, shutting away familiar houses and streets. Its dampness fell softly over Priscilla's hair and shoulders; like a grey veil it closed down over the town. But Prissie did not mind the fog; every Nantucket child was well used to it, and she was accustomed to finding her way about in it. She ran on to Sherburne's main street as swiftly as if it had been a sunny morning instead of a foggy night, and turning down Step Lane made her way to the Coleman house where the candle-lit windows shone hazily through the misty fog.

"'Two lights burning and no ship at sea,'" Prissie whispered the old saying that to a Nantucketer meant an extravagant household, as she noted the candle-light at so early an hour.

Through the uncurtained window Prissie could see Mrs. Coleman evidently preparing the evening meal, and Judy's small twin brothers were playing happily about the room. But Judy was not to be seen; and, before Prissie could decide if she would rap at the door and inquire for her or wait outside until Judy appeared, her arms

were suddenly firmly grasped from behind and a gruff voice whispered:

"Don't you dare scream," and Priscilla felt herself being steadily pulled backward so that she fell against her assailant and the two stumbled over on to the pebbly path. Then a familiar voice exclaimed:

"'Tis thy fault, Tory! What made thee tumble against me?"

"Oh, Judy! I'm glad 'tis you!" whimpered Priscilla. "I thought maybe the English had landed, as Cap'n Swain says they may any day, and that they were going to carry us all off," and Prissie clutched Judy's arm as if confident that the older girl would protect her, if need were, from such a fate.

But Judy drew away from Priscilla's grasp and struggled to her feet.

"Whatever dost thou want at my house?" she asked, "and why dost thou fear the English, when thee signals their boats and meets their officer on the bluff to give him news of our Nantucket boats? Thou wouldst ——"

But Priscilla too was now on her feet, and she was no longer frightened or ready to be again falsely accused; and without remembering that

she was in the Coleman yard or that Judy was older and stronger than herself, she ran fiercely toward her exclaiming:

"Don't you dare say things like that to me, Judy Coleman!" and struck out wildly; but the surprised Judy had given a sideways jump out of reach of the intended blow so that Priscilla's rush forward sent her stumbling to her knees, hurting her hands on the rough pebbles.

In an instant Judy was beside her.

"'Tis what thee well deserves, Priscilla," she declared; "thou meant to hit me."

And now Priscilla made no effort to rise. Her hands and knees hurt; she was tired, hungry and bewildered, for she could not understand why Judy Coleman, who had long been her best friend, should be so ready to believe such dreadful things about her; so, trying to keep back her tears, Prissie lay on the cobbled path, the fog nearly hiding her from Judy who, like a shadow, hovered over her.

But Prissie's silence began to frighten Judy, and in a softer tone she asked:

"Are thee hurt, Prissie?" and when Prissie made no answer Judy was instantly on her knees

touching Prissie's damp hair, and repeating her question.

"Oh, Judy! How can you think me so vile a traitor?" came Prissie's broken voice. "I'd not think harm of you if I saw you hand in hand with Sir Henry Clinton himself."

"Can thee stand up, Priscilla?" Judy asked in a whisper, and Prissie was so quickly on her feet that Judy drew back a step, as if fearful of a new attack; but now Prissie had clasped her arm with both hands, and was whispering eagerly: "I'm not a Tory! Oh, Judy! do you think I'd send my own father to the prison-ships? Let me tell you ——"

"Shsshh!" warned Judy, drawing Prissie quickly into a deeper shadow as the kitchen door opened and Mrs. Coleman peered for a moment into the thick fog.

"Come on," Judy commanded, and the two girls crept silently down the lane hand-in-hand; and without a word Judy led the way to one of the smaller wharves, and in the lee of a small fish house drew Prissie to a seat on a rough bench.

"No one will come here at this hour. 'Tis early for boats, even if they could make harbor in such a fog. Now, Prissie, thou canst say what

thou may please to say. I had forgotten thy father's boat was out of port."

Swiftly and earnestly Prissie told the story of the signal pole; nor did Judy speak until Prissie told of the young officer slashing away the strips of canvas; at this she chuckled with satisfaction and declared: " 'Twas fine that he had to do it. Why, Prissie! he thought, just as I did, that someone had sent thee to help the English cruisers. And he praised thee for a brave little maid! Oh, Prissie! Is it not a grand joke that thou shouldst fool a British officer, as well, as is full likely, save our fishing-boats! Why, Prissie, thou art surely as brave as General Washington himself! " and Judy was now as full of praise for Priscilla's courage and as ready to declare her the bravest little maid on Nantucket Island, as she had, so short a time ago, to accuse her of being a traitor and a Tory.

But as the girls started toward home Judy warned Priscilla not to tell anyone else of the signals on the bluff, or that she had tried to pull them down, and not to speak of the English officer's part in Priscilla's adventure.

" It might well bring danger upon thee, and upon us all, Priscilla," she warned the younger

girl, " and if Nickanoose gets wind of your meddling with his signals there's no telling what might happen," and Judy's voice was so solemn that Priscilla began to realize something of the real peril of her adventure, and quickly promised to keep silent regarding it.

But Judy's next suggestion made Prissie forget all possible dangers:

" 'Twould be well, Prissie, if thou and I should keep a sharp outlook for these traitor signals! What say? Shall we not do our best to play other jokes on these British cruisers? "

" Oh, Judy! Do you suppose we could? 'Tis splendid of you to think of so grand a plan," Prissie replied eagerly; and, promising to meet soon, the girls bade each other good-night. They were both firmly resolved to do their utmost to keep the threatening enemy away from Nantucket, and the pact they then made was to lead to far more important results than either Judy Coleman or Priscilla Fowler could possibly imagine.

CHAPTER V

A HOLIDAY

NOTWITHSTANDING their promise to meet soon, a week passed before Judy and Prissie met.

"'Tis not my fault," thought Prissie, who had twice rapped at the Coleman door, only to be told by Judy's mother that Judy had work to do and could not be roaming about the island.

"And 'tis not that I am idle," Prissie told herself, remembering that, while her mother helped the Griffith household, she had done much of the work at home; but the little girl was troubled by the fear of signals waving a traitor's warning to the enemy; and when, on May day morning, her mother declared that Mrs. Griffith no longer needed neighborly assistance, Prissie's first thought was that she would make another attempt to see Judy.

"And if Judy cannot come out I will wait no longer. I will see what Nickanoose is up to," she resolved, as Mrs. Fowler praised Mrs. Griffith's sons, Peleg and Osiah, declaring that they were as handy about the house as girls.

"But 'tis ill fortune that Nantucket boys must be kept on shore, learning naught of their rightful business as sailors," said Mrs. Fowler, remembering all the good ships the British had captured since the beginning of the war of the American Revolution. One hundred and thirty-four Nantucket vessels were thus taken, and others when too closely pursued put on so great a press of sail as to run under and never rise again.

"Debby Swain tells me there are violets and trillium in blossom and wild azalea in bud toward the bluffs," continued Mrs. Fowler, "and if you wish, Prissie, you can go for a day's picnic. You have been a good little housekeeper, and indeed Mrs. Griffith ought to thank you instead of me, for I could not have left home had I not had so good and obedient a daughter. You have well earned a holiday," and Mrs. Fowler readily agreed to Prissie's eager plan to spend the day out-of-doors with Judy Coleman.

But there was no thought or plan for a well-filled lunch basket; a square of corn bread wrapped in a bit of brown paper was the only luncheon Priscilla asked or expected, and with this in the pocket of her gingham dress, and wear-

ing a cap that belonged to her father, Prissie hurried off to find Judy and tell her the good news.

She was not far from her own gate, however, when she saw Debby Swain running down the slope from Captain Swain's house.

"Oh, dear! Debby will want to go too if she knows that Judy and I are off to the moors," thought Priscilla, stepping quickly behind a sycamore tree at the corner of the lane so that Debby might not see her. "Judy and I will want to talk and make plans; it would never do to let Debby know about Nickanoose," Prissie whispered to herself, watching Debby as the little girl, swinging a basket from her arm, took the turn of the lane leading to the Fowler home.

"Goody! She didn't see me, and by the time she finds out where I am Judy and I will be off. Debby always has a basket," and, with a smile, recalling the egg basket that Debby had so hopefully tugged to the outer shore, Prissie raced down the lane and made her way to the Coleman house. She was about to start up the path when Judy, appearing at the door, motioned to her to stop. Judy's hand at her lips and the violent shaking of her head instantly convinced Prissie

that she must not even call out a greeting, and Judy's motions, pointing toward the wharves and then at Priscilla, sent the would-be visitor hurrying on her way. A backward glance told her that Judy had disappeared.

"Whatever can have happened? And where does Judy want me to go?" Priscilla wondered; then remembering the seat near the fish-house at Long Wharf, where Judy had taken her on the April night after her adventure on the bluffs, Prissie hurried in that direction.

She had just reached the fish-house when she saw Judy running down the street.

"Judy runs just like a grasshopper," thought Prissie, as Judy came bounding toward the wharf, her thin legs seeming hardly to let her feet touch the ground, and her arms waving in the air.

"Quick, Prissie! Behind the fish-house!" she called in a husky whisper, at the same moment clutching the amazed Priscilla by the shoulder and pulling her around the corner of the fish-house, where a narrow plank was the only foothold above the tide-water now several feet in depth.

A small boat, fastened by a rope to a staple in the plank, swayed with the motion of the tide,

and before Priscilla could ask a question Judy had grasped the rope and was pulling the boat close to the wharf. "Get thee in, Priscilla! Lose not a minute. I'll tell thee as soon as I can," she commanded so earnestly that Prissie obeyed. In a moment Judy had untied the rope, and with one of the oars that had rested in the bottom of the boat, she was vigorously pushing the boat clear of the wharf.

"Take the bow seat, Prissie, and help row. Head for Quaise," she said; and in a few moments the boat was a good distance from shore, for both Prissie and Judy could row a boat as easily as they could walk, nor could either of them remember when or how they had learned to row. Playing about the wharves and shore the children of Nantucket accepted boats as a natural way of getting about on water and had no fear of them; and now Judy and Prissie kept stroke as smoothly and rowed as evenly as need be.

As soon as they were a short distance from shore Judy began to talk:

"Prissie, thee cannot think what has happened! Nickanoose has found out that someone cut his signals loose. And he thinks I did it!" and for a moment Judy rested on her oar, but gave

Prissie no time to ask questions before she continued eagerly:

"I know 'tis so, Prissie. And I hurried thee as fast as I could lest Mistress Miriam Coffin should chance to be starting for Quaise herself and see us. She told my mother 'twas a dangerous thing for a small Quaker girl to go roaming about on the moors, and said she had been told a girl had been seen climbing a 'lookout,' and that she hoped 'twas not me! Does not that prove, Priscilla, that she has ways of knowing what the English are doing?"

Priscilla could only nod her head, a little fiercely, at this proof of a Tory spy in Nantucket, for Judy went on eagerly:

"And this very morning she again warned my mother to keep a sharp eye on me, and not to let me out of sight; and Mother thinks it most kind for Mistress Coffin to care what befalls me. But the reason is there is more signaling to be done, and she wants to be sure no one, not even a little Quaker girl, knows of it!"

Prissie nearly dropped the oar in her excitement at this news, for her father's boat, *The Wild Goose*, had left harbor that very morning before sunrise, with a load of salt and wool, hoping

to reach a Connecticut port and bring back a cargo of provisions. It was a dangerous cruise to undertake, but Captain Fowler knew that his family and friends were near the end of their food supplies, and, with several of his neighbors, had resolved to risk the dangers in the hope of bringing home a cargo of flour and such other food as he could secure.

"Row, Prissie. Let us get as far out as we can so that no one can see who we are," commanded Judy, adding quickly: "Thou wert surely clever to understand my signals and to run straight to the wharf. I feared my mother would see thee and discover that I was not in the upper chamber at my knitting. But I was down to the wharf not an hour ago, Prissie! And I saw the Indian Nickanoose put off in his canoe toward the head of the harbor."

Prissie gave a little exclamation. She wondered how Judy could steal in and out without Mrs. Coleman's knowledge; she had a little sense of fear of what might befall them if the Indian should discover them.

The harbor was unusually calm; the ripple of the incoming tide, setting toward the head of the harbor, carried them smoothly along. Flocks of

gulls rose from their feeding places along the sand-bars, and with harsh calls flew toward the island. Black-breasted plover and wild duck floated peacefully near shore, and the cries of many wild fowl flying over the beaches and quiet harbor drifted on the air unnoticed by the two little girls who rowed steadily on, too busy with their thoughts to talk. Not until Judy, in a loud whisper, said that they must land well below Mistress Coffin's farmhouse, did Prissie realize that they had indeed embarked on an adventure that might mean far greater peril than climbing the whalemen's lookout. But she promptly obeyed Judy's directions, and the dory was headed sharply toward a long spit of sand beyond which was a shallow cove well out of sight of any house.

"The tide is on the turn," declared Judy, as the two girls jumped ashore and pulled the light dory well up on the beach. "'Tis full likely we may have to walk home," for Judy knew that the outgoing tide would leave long stretches of bare mud and sand between shore and channel, and Quaise could not easily be reached by boat excepting at high tide.

"'Twould be a long walk indeed; I'd rather

wait another tide than tug through all the sand 'twixt here and Sherburne," responded Priscilla, who began to wonder if it was not possible that Judy was mistaken in believing that Mistress Coffin had aught to do with Nickanoose's signals.

CHAPTER VI

QUAISE

But Judy made no reply. Her sharp eyes were looking along the shore and up the sloping bank, thickly covered with close growing shrubs.

"We could hide among those bushes if need be," she said, as if speaking to herself.

"But why should we hide?" questioned Prissie. "You have dragged me over here as if there was not a minute to lose, and now you talk of hiding! If we do not find Nickanoose what's the use of our coming?"

But Judy did not notice Prissie's complaining words, and Prissie had hardly finished speaking when Judy exclaimed:

"We must drag the dory well under the lee of this bank, and pull the bushes over it so that it will not be seen if some craft draws in near shore. I tell thee, Prissie, that we'll discover secrets before we set forth for home."

"'Tis *The Wild Goose* I'm thinking of," responded Priscilla, but she helped Judy drag the

light dory further from the water's edge, and to pull down branches of shrubs over it until it would not be noticed by any passing craft. This was hardly completed when Judy grasped Prissie's arm and drew her down on the sand.

"Lie as flat as thee can, Prissie," she whispered, "and crowd thyself close in to the bank."

Priscilla obeyed, sure that Nickanoose was close at hand until, apparently from the bank behind them, the murmur of voices was distinctly heard.

"The boat should come by next tide?" said one in a questioning voice.

"To be sure. And Nickanoose has just brought a message for the cap'n," came the response; then there came a sound as if a heavy door was being cautiously closed, and this was followed by the noise of retreating footsteps.

Prissie and Judy, huddled close under the bank, did not move or speak until all was quiet. Then, very cautiously, they sat up and looked at each other.

"Are we near a house?" whispered Prissie; but Judy shook her head. With her mother and father she had once visited Mistress Coffin's country house, and she knew that it stood beyond

the slope on a little knoll that overlooked the harbor.

"No. But didst thou hear what they said? Oh, Prissie! The boat they expect by next tide may be one of the British craft spying out for more boats to capture, and these men be Tories."

"They have made off," declared Prissie; "let us climb up the slope, Judy. Is it not full likely they may have set some signal by which the boat will know where to land?"

"Thou art truly more clever than I, Prissie!" Judy admiringly declared, as they started to scramble up the slope. "I doubt if I should even have thought to climb the 'lookout' as thou did. And I truly believe the men we overheard were here to set a signal. And, Prissie! Will it not be best for us to go different ways to the top to make sure we do not miss some mark or sign they have set for the boat?"

Prissie agreed. She was sure Judy had spoken truly in declaring that secrets were to be discovered at Quaise. "I'll whistle this way," and Prissie sounded a thin wavering whistle that might easily have been mistaken for the call of a sea-bird. "I'll whistle twice, just like that, if I find anything or if I want you to come,"

she said, "and if you find anything you do the same."

Judy's face showed her approval of Prissie's plan.

"'Tis a splendid contrivance, and thou art as clever as Mistress Coffin herself. If I get to the top first I'll whistle," she said, and Judy started straight up the slope while Prissie turned to the right, and in a moment the thickly growing bushes hid them from each other.

There were swamp-pinks, as the children called the wild azaleas, already showing buds, and dog-tooth violets in full bloom; orange grass gave forth its pleasant fragrance, and more than one wild bird, with a startled note, rose from its hidden nest as Prissie made her careful way up the slope. Now and then she would stop and listen, half fearing that the men whose voices she had heard might be hiding near and might suddenly confront her and demand an explanation of why a little maid of Sherburne was so far from home. But beyond the calls of the birds, and the faint sound of the surf on the outer sand-bars there was nothing to be heard, nor could Prissie discover any fluttering signal to reward her search, but as she came out on a

slight rise of ground she stopped with a whispered exclamation. "'Tis as if I stepped on a board," thought Prissie, looking down at the thick bed of moss and dead leaves beneath her feet, and she stamped firmly and with surprise heard a faint echo beneath the ground.

Instantly the little girl was on her knees pulling at the moss and leaves.

"It may be a treasure chest that pirates have hidden," she thought, and when her eager fingers grasped a stout iron ring she tugged at it so strongly that she nearly fell over backward when moss and leaves fell aside and a stoutly built trap-door rose slowly in front of her.

For a moment Prissie crouched behind it, hardly realizing what it was; then, with one more frantic pull it was wide open, and Prissie found herself staring down some ladder-like steps.

"'Tis a hidden cave for treasure," whispered Prissie. "What if there be a full barrel of golden guineas at the bottom? Will not Judy be surprised when I call her to see what I have found!" and an instant later Prissie was carefully creeping down the rough ladder and found herself in a narrow passage.

From the dim light that filtered down from the

opening she could see a few feet ahead, and, confident that the hidden treasure was at the end of this passage, she ran on only to find that it turned sharply to another. But now Prissie was sure that she was near to the end of her search, and made her way quickly along through the deepening shadows only to find herself confronted by a door against which she pushed with all her strength, but it did not yield.

"Now the treasure is surely beyond this door," she thought, "and if I had but a lighted candle maybe I could find a way to open it," and Prissie reached up hoping to discover a latch or bar that it would be possible to move. As she stood there, close against the door, her quick ears became conscious that someone was approaching it from the further side, and, with a sense of danger near at hand, Priscilla pressed back against the wall of the passage just as the clang of an iron bar was heard, the door pulled open, and a tall figure, shadow-like in the dark passage, sped past her so closely that it brushed her skirts.

In an instant Prissie had slipped through the open doorway and was pushing the heavy door that swung noiselessly into place. After several

vain efforts she succeeded in lifting the iron bar that secured it.

This new passageway was less dark than the other, and a little way ahead Prissie could see a square space of light, and she hurried on to find herself at the foot of a flight of steps that evidently led into a house. And now the little girl hesitated, but only for a moment. Whatever house this might be it was better than that dark, mysterious passage, with an unknown person who might even now be battering against the barred door; and at this thought Priscilla fled up the stairs as if an enemy was close at her heels.

"Why, 'tis a kitchen!" she exclaimed aloud, as she stepped into a neat room whose yellow-painted floor shone in the May sunlight that streamed in through two windows. There were woven rag rugs on the floor, several high-backed wooden chairs with cushioned seats, and on the further side of the room a long narrow table of dark, shining wood. Above the table were shelves on which stood a fine array of shining pewter plates, mugs, platters and pitchers, as well as wooden bowls made of red cedar.

On the broad hearth at one end of the room a fire lay ready for lighting, and Prissie was quick

to notice a number of lanterns on a shelf by themselves at the corner of the room.

"'Twill not do to stay here," she thought, turning toward a door that evidently opened into the main part of the house, but as she turned toward it she heard the sound of voices and looked about for a hiding-place; a big basket under the table seemed the only possible one and she ran quickly across the room, crept under the table and pulled the basket over her.

CHAPTER VII

A LETTER

"I WISH I had closed that cellar-door! Oh, why didn't I!" was Prissie's chief thought as the sound of approaching footsteps made her huddle more closely under the sheltering basket. A moment later she knew that the door into the main body of the room had opened and that two people had entered.

"Nickanoose is none too careful," she heard a familiar voice declare; "he has left the panel opening to the passage wide open."

"But he doubtless means to return at once, and he knows you to be in the house," came the reply in a voice Prissie did not recognize.

"Well, sit thee down, Captain. The Indian gave thee my message promptly, for I was close behind him. And now listen carefully: You must sail on the next tide for New York and deliver this letter to Admiral Digby, commander of the British squadrons cruising these waters. Nantucket people need food and every comfort, Captain; and I have humbly asked permission to

send my vessels to New York and that my trade 'twixt Sherburne and that port be protected. Thou shalt hear the letter."

And the amazed Prissie now heard the familiar voice of Mistress Coffin reading the letter to the British admiral declaring her devoted loyalty to King George, and the needs of the people on Nantucket Island. She insinuated that most of the inhabitants sympathized with the cause of America and promised, if permission to trade and protection were given her, to do all in her power to serve His Majesty.

" 'Tis a clever letter, Mistress Coffin, and if the British agree thou will have all the trade of the island, for the mainland people believe us all to be Tories and would not lift a hand to aid us. When thy husband and son come home from their voyage they will find thee owning the island. What's that?" and the voice of the unknown sailor had a threatening tone. The puzzled and frightened Priscilla heard the sudden scrape of chairs on the kitchen floor as Mistress Coffin and the captain of one of her vessels suddenly rose to their feet. She heard the kitchen door open; heard Nickanoose declare that someone, a spy, a traitor, had slipped through the passage-

way barring the heavy door behind him, and must at that moment be hiding in the house.

" Nonsense! " and Mistress Coffin's voice rang confidently. " Cap'n Moore and I have been here since you left to set the landing signal. Why, the kitchen doors and windows are bolted on the inside, and no one could pass us."

" 'Tis best to search, Mistress," the now frightened Priscilla heard Captain Moore declare. " Thou knowest the new selectmen of the town are all against King George, and that the people think your prices unfair in these needy days. If some clever spy knows thy plans and carries them to town trouble might brew against thee. 'Tis best to search pantry and cupboards."

By the sounds of opening doors, of footsteps moving quickly about the rooms Priscilla knew the search for the intruder was under way. Whatever could she do or say if she was discovered under the basket? And what would become of her? Mistress Coffin might not let any serious harm befall her, but she might keep her shut up here at Quaise, thought Priscilla, and when Captain Moore gave the basket a questioning poke Prissie nearly screamed aloud in terror, sure that she was discovered. But the basket evi-

dently did not occur to any of the searchers as a possible hiding-place, and it was not long before Priscilla heard them all leave the room, heard other doors open and shut, the clang of the heavy outer door, and then the grind of wheels over the pebbled driveway.

"'Tis Mistress Coffin's cart," thought Priscilla, and ventured to stretch her cramped legs out from the sheltering basket and to look out into the kitchen.

"They have closed the shutters," she whispered, crawling out from under the table. "'Tis just as well; no one can be looking in," and Prissie now stood up. She suddenly realized that she was hungry and thirsty, and gratefully remembering the square of corn bread in her deep pocket she drew it out, seated herself in one of the high-backed chairs and devoured it to the last crumb.

"I'll get me a drink at some near-by spring," she resolved, "but what will Judy think has become of me?" and she ran across the shadowy kitchen, lifted the stout oaken bar that held fast the outer door, stepped out and closed it carefully behind her, and stood for a moment to look down the slope to the small lake over which a

number of willow trees leaned as if to see their own reflection in the smooth water.

"I must find Judy. 'Tis surely noon," thought Priscilla, when after a sharp look about the lonely moor she had assured herself that no one was in sight, and turned toward the wooded hill under which, as she now knew, ran the tunnel to the trap-door opening toward the harbor. She had hardly reached the shelter of the growth of wind-beaten oak trees when she stopped and sounded the call that she and Judy had agreed upon, the wavering bird-like call that so easily might be mistaken for that of a sea-bird.

Twice the whistle echoed in the silent wood, but there was no answer. Priscilla hurried on toward the summit of the hill, and near the top stopped and whistled again; before she could repeat the call there was a rush through the bushes, a familiar voice shouting:

"Prissie! Prissie! I have seen strange sights!" Judy declared as she darted from behind a thickly growing shrub, seized Prissie by both shoulders, and went on eagerly:

"Mistress Coffin herself has been to her own house, and has but a moment since set forth for home. And the Indian has been flying about like

a wild man indeed! And a strange seafaring man went toward the shore ——"

"Cap'n Moore!" declared Prissie. "And whatever you have seen, Judy, I have had even greater adventures. Let us find a spring, Judy! I am too thirsty to talk! And, oh, Judy, I ate all my corn bread!"

"And I have eaten mine, Prissie! For I put a bit in my pocket from the pantry when I slipped out. There's a cool spring down the slope," said Judy, leading the way nearer the shore where, through a bed of white sand, ran a thread of clear fresh water.

Prissie drank thirstily, and then resting on the warm sand she began the story of her morning adventure.

Judy listened earnestly, her dark eyes fixed on Priscilla, and when Prissie repeated all that she could recall of the letter to the British admiral Judy fairly gasped in amazement and anger.

"And Cap'n Coffin in far seas and knowing naught of all her wickedness! Let's find the Indian's signal and pull it down," and instantly Prissie was on her feet and the two girls were off toward the knoll that looked across the narrow

arm of the sea and the long sand-bar that shut it in from Nantucket Sound.

"Judy! 'Tis best that we go more softly," Prissie whispered. "Who knows but Nickanoose may be guarding the signal."

Judy nodded in response, and they now advanced as silently as possible, until from behind a thick growth of scrubby oaks they could see the little knoll on the slope of which the trap-door was hidden.

"There it is! The same signal that waved from the 'lookout': three strips of sail-cloth!" said Prissie, pointing to the fluttering signals.

"None too easy to find unless one was on the outlook for them," whispered Judy, as she peered out from behind the sheltering oaks.

In a short time the girls had satisfied themselves that no one was watching the signals, and when they came out from their hiding-place Prissie pointed toward the long stretch of mud that lay between shore and channel.

"Look! 'Tis Nickanoose!" she exclaimed, and the two girls watched the tall Indian, with his canoe balanced on his head, making his way toward the channel. They watched him until he had reached the water's edge, launched and en-

tered the canoe, and paddled off toward Sherburne. Then they ran back to the signal tree and in a few moments the strips of white canvas no longer fluttered in the breeze.

It was now mid-afternoon, and the girls slowly made their way down to the hidden dory. It would be hours before the tide would come sweeping up to Quaise and enable them to float the boat and row home. But just now they were not thinking of that; they wanted to talk over Prissie's unforeseen visit to Mistress Coffin's house, and what she had overheard.

"But she does mean to bring food to Nantucket," said Judy, when Prissie had again repeated Mistress Coffin's letter.

"But, Judy! She asks prices that no one can pay. She would take the last sperm or bayberry candle, and the last gallon of oil, the very lambs from the pasture for a quart of molasses or a pound of flour. My mother says she will own all Nantucket if this war continues," Prissie soberly replied. "'Tis not to help her neighbors that she calls them the enemies of King George," she added.

For a moment Judy did not answer. She was well pleased to be on this pleasant shore with long

hours before her, and with Priscilla for a companion. "'Twill puzzle Mistress Coffin to know who meddles with her signals," and Judy gave a little chuckle of satisfaction in which Prissie joined.

"I'm hungry," Judy declared, after they had again talked over the surprise of Priscilla on discovering the hidden passageway, and her fears as she lay trembling under the basket in Mistress Coffin's kitchen. "I'll wager there's all manner of dainties in Mistress Coffin's cupboard: jellies, and dried fruits, and conserves in jars; and who knows but bread and meat, for she has an Indian servant there for weeks at a time."

"I could not fasten the kitchen door behind me, though I closed it tightly. But I'd not open it if a feast was spread for me," responded Prissie.

"Did I not tell thee a week since, at the door of her town house, that she was a traitor?" declared Judy triumphantly. "If I spoke of all her goodies 'twas not that I would touch them. But, Prissie, would not some roasted quahogs taste well, roasted in hot sand? Why, I'd like nothing so well. And we could dig all we want with a bit of stick!"

"But we've no fire, nor flint and steel to strike

a spark," Prissie reminded her, and in almost the same breath exclaimed:

"Judy! Here comes Cap'n Moore."

"Quick, Priscilla, quick!" whispered Judy in response as she sprang to her feet.

But it was too late for them to hide; the burly captain, in whose pocket rested the letter to the British admiral, and whose craft lay at anchor well down the channel, had seen them and waved his hand in friendly greeting as he came striding toward them.

"Two small maids, as I live!" he called out. "Be ye visitors of Mistress Coffin's? Or what fetched ye here?" and his small grey eyes sent a sharp glance down the shore.

"We're alone," Judy promptly announced, "and we know not how we will get back to Sherburne 'til the tide turns! Here is our dory! We have pulled bushes over it," and she pointed to the half concealed boat that the captain had already discovered.

"Ah-hh! Been here since the tide turned, have ye? And who sent ye, and on what errand?" he asked sharply.

CHAPTER VIII

QUAHOGS

But neither of the girls answered him. With one impulse Judy and Prissie turned and fled down the beach, and, although the captain called after them and ran his best to overtake them, he was too stout and clumsy to keep pace with two fleet-footed girls; and, breathless and angry, he soon stopped, grumbling:

"I might as well come about; they've taken the wind out of my sails," and for a few moments he watched the girls skimming over the sandy beach.

"Might as well get under way," he decided, and turned back, finally concluding that he had been too easily suspicious.

"They are but little maids, after all. But they have ventured too far from home. These be days when a seafaring man does well to be cautious; but 'twas a foolish thought to run after the little maids," and the Tory captain smiled at his own impulsiveness, little imagining that one of these girls had heard his recent conversation with Mis-

tress Coffin, and that both knew of the letter he was to carry to the British admiral.

Prissie, glancing over her shoulder, was the first to discover that they were no longer pursued; but Judy insisted they should run on.

"He may turn and come after us full sail," she declared; so not until Captain Moore's stout figure had vanished did the girls sink down on the sand, out of breath and too tired to keep up their swift pace.

But almost before she was down Judy gave an upward spring and a yell of surprise.

"A fire! I sat down right on a fire!" she exclaimed; and it took but a moment for the girls to discover that the hot sand, from which Judy had so quickly leaped, covered a bed of live coals. A heap of quahog shells near by showed that the captain had just lunched.

"Oh, Judy! What could be better fortune than this!" exclaimed Priscilla. "The coals are still red; and we can get quahogs, plenty of them ——"

"And without digging for them!" and Judy pointed to a heap of freshly dug quahogs just beyond the pile of empty shells. The two girls forgot everything else in their eagerness to roast

the delicious quahogs, and it was not long before they were feasting happily.

"'Twas good fortune he tried to catch us," said Judy, "or we would never have run this far."

"We are a third of the distance toward home," said Prissie; "if we cut across the pastures we could get home by sunset."

"I like not to leave the dory," said Judy. "I know not to whom it may belong. I did but mean to borrow it," and she turned a sober face toward Prissie, who agreed that it was indeed a serious matter not to return a borrowed boat.

"But we cannot stay here 'til near midnight, and then pull back against the tide," said Prissie. "We can come to-morrow and fetch the boat! We *must* go home, Judy! If we do not all Sherburne will be out to search for us, and Mistress Coffin will soon know where we have been."

"Thou knowest more than 'tis safe to know, Prissie, and so do I," said Judy; "but we'll get home as quickly as may be. Though I like not to cross the marsh at the pasture's edge. Will thou tell thy mother of the hidden passage, Prissie, and of all we have heard and seen?" asked Judy, as the girls climbed the sloping bank and turned toward Sherburne. Judy's voice

had so queer a sound that Priscilla stopped and looked at her in surprise.

"Why, Judy!" she exclaimed, for Judy's dark eyes were clouded with tears.

"Prissie, my mother told me to-day that should she hear of my being again in mischief she would send me to Boston by the first safe passage, to go to Mistress Mary Gardner's school," explained Judy. "And besides that," she continued, "what good will it do for us to tell? 'Twill only put a stop to our watching Tory signalings. 'Tis far better for us to keep it a secret."

Prissie quickly agreed; it seemed to both the girls, as they earnestly discussed all they had heard and seen on their visit at Quaise, that it was much wiser not to tell of Prissie's discovery of the hidden passage, nor of the letter that was to be sent to the British admiral.

"Judy, your mother will have long ago missed you, and whatever can you say?" questioned Priscilla as they came in sight of the town. "I am all right," she continued, "for my mother told me I could have a day's holiday, and will only ask me did I enjoy the day, and if I went toward the cliffs on the South Shore. But you came without your mother's knowledge!" And

Priscilla began to think that now Judy would surely be sent to Mistress Gardner's school in the far-off city of Boston, and her face was anxious and troubled.

But Judy was not greatly disturbed.

"I'll wager my mother thinks me safe in my room, so diligent with my knitting that I come not to supper. Dost thou forget my parrot my father brought me a year since?" she asked.

"But what has a parrot to do with your mother finding out that you are not in your room, nor have been since morning?" questioned Priscilla. "She will have missed you since dinner-time, and 'tis now near sunset."

"But my mother was to take the twins for a day's visit with Mistress Macy. She'll not be home much before me, and if she calls the parrot will say: 'Yes, ma'am! As soon as I've knit once more 'round.' The parrot is well trained. And beside that, Prissie, should it chance that one opened my door they'd see me sitting by the window!"

Priscilla stared in amazement. Before she could speak Judy went on, a more cheerful note in her voice: "That is, anybody just glancing in would think 'twas me, for I buttoned my grey

linsey-woolsey about a pillow and set it in the chair, and stuffed out the sleeves and pinned my knitting to them!"

"Oh, Judy! You do think of things!" declared Prissie admiringly. "But I do hope your mother is not yet at home. I've a mind to go with you that I may be sure all is well!"

But Judy thought it far safer that they should separate as soon as they reached Main Street. "I'll see thee to-morrow, Prissie, if all goes well," she promised, "for thou knowest, Prissie, the dory must be brought back from Quaise!"

Priscilla nodded in response. Suddenly she realized that she was so tired that every step seemed an effort. But she plodded on through the town and up the lane leading to her own home, pushed open the kitchen door and stumbled into the room, that seemed full of the most pleasant fragrances and savors that any little girl could possibly imagine; and Prissie forgot her wet feet, and shoes soggy from crossing the marsh; forgot that she was tired as she sniffed the appetizing odors that came from the brick oven whose door Mrs. Fowler had just opened.

"Is it truly a cake, Mother? Is it?" exclaimed Prissie eagerly, running forward to gaze

at the pan her mother was carrying toward the table.

"It is indeed, child; and it may well be I am a reckless woman to use good sugar and white flour for such a purpose. But what think you! Mistress Griffith has sent me a full sack of flour and a bucket of sugar, saying I might do her a like favor when *The Wild Goose* comes home. So we may have our cake safely."

"Are there raisins in it?" questioned Prissie hopefully, and Mrs. Fowler nodded smilingly.

"Raisins and a bit of dried citron and a pinch of ginger. But thy feet, Prissie! Wet as can be! Off with those shoes, and make thyself neat while I spread the table," said her mother. Prissie promptly obeyed, and was soon seated opposite her mother at the round kitchen table.

"'Tis like a shearing-day feast!" she exclaimed happily, as her mother helped her to a generous portion of scrambled eggs, poured her a glass of milk, and bade her help herself to the freshly baked corn bread.

"All this and cake, too," she whispered, as she ate hungrily. "Will there be a shearing this year, Mother?" she questioned, as her mother cut

the cake in squares, setting the plate where Prissie could easily help herself.

"To be sure! The sheep must be lightened from their heavy fleeces before hot weather," responded Mrs. Fowler; "early in June, 'tis full likely; and I must take care to keep enough sugar on hand to make cakes for shearing day. 'Tis Nantucket's chief holiday since no region can show such fine sheep as ours. Whatever made you question that there'd not be a shearing, Prissie?"

"Because there are so many changes now that there is war," Prissie answered soberly, "with Tory ships everywhere."

"Well, child, trouble not thy heart over things beyond thy help. It may well be the worst of our worries are over. Nantucket has sent a committee to Newport and New York to tell the British commanders of the unfair treatment the British armed vessels show toward our helpless fishing craft; and Sir Henry Clinton has promised that if Nantucket will not harbor enemies of the king, and take no part in the war, his ships shall no longer trouble our fishing boats."

Priscilla's blue eyes seemed to widen in amaze-

ment as she gazed at her mother, a piece of the delicious cake in one hand.

"Did the committee promise that Nantucket would do those things, Mother? Why, I have heard my father, and Cap'n Swain, and many another neighbor say that America was but defending her just rights, and that they would each one do their best to help her," said Priscilla. "And every child knows what the British prison-ships do to our sailors," she added quickly.

"To be sure, child! To be sure. 'Tis a question to puzzle the wisest of us. But think no more of it. America has the bravest of soldiers, and we will hope that soon our seas will be safe for Nantucket ships. Eat thy cake, Prissie, and think no more of war. You must have wandered far from town to-day. 'Tis no wonder you are hungry, and tired out."

Prissie asked no further questions. The safety of Nantucket, of its sailors and ships, seemed the most important thing in the world to the little island girl. Everywhere she heard the neighbors declare that it was British ships that captured the Nantucket vessels; that it was British soldiers who threatened to destroy every house on the island; and only a few weeks earlier the town

of Sherburne had been raided and robbed by English sailors; so it was small wonder that Prissie was eager that King George the Third should be defeated and the Americans triumph. And as the little girl went to her room that night she again resolved to do her best to prevent any friendly signal to British craft being shown from the bluffs or points of Nantucket Island.

"And Judy Coleman is so wonderful; it's splendid to be her friend," she thought happily, with a thrill of delight as she recalled that no signal now fluttered from the wooded knoll at Quaise.

CHAPTER IX

JUDY SAILS AWAY

THE morning after Prissie's visit to Quaise passed without news from Judy Coleman, and Prissie did not venture out of her own yard, fearing Judy might come in her absence. She dared not risk a visit to the Coleman house, thinking Judy's mother might question her; and remembering the borrowed dory hidden under leafy branches, and knowing it must surely be brought back before the ebb of the morning tide, Prissie passed an anxious and unhappy morning; and when little Debby Swain, wearing a fine new sunbonnet of pink-checked gingham, came running up the path Priscilla greeted her so indifferently that the younger girl gazed at her in surprise.

"Is it that you have a toothache this morning that you look so unhappy, Prissie?" she questioned anxiously. Prissie shook her head.

"No, Debby. 'Tis that I expected Judy Coleman, and now 'tis near noon and she has not come," she replied.

Debby's face brightened. "That is because

she has been out in my grandfather's dory; we went to the wharf not an hour ago and she was just climbing out of it," declared Debby; and, at Priscilla's exclamation of surprise, continued: "And my grandfather said: 'Where did you find the dory, Judy? 'Twas missing all day yesterday.' But she said naught in reply, and was off like the wind," and Debby looked at Prissie as if wondering how Judy's queer behavior could be accounted for.

"Goody! Goody!" exclaimed Prissie, with a little jump that made Debby again wonder at Prissie.

"Now I know why Judy has not come," said Prissie, and the puzzled Debby accepted this as an explanation; but she had even more startling news to deliver.

"And what think you, Prissie? Judy's mother is looking about for a safe passage for Judy to Boston; and Mistress Coffin has said that Judy can go on one of her vessels, the first leaving port."

For a moment Prissie stared at Debby as if she could not believe her own ears.

"'Tis surely so, Prissie. Mistress Coleman was at the market this morning and told my

grandfather that Judy was to go to Mistress Mary Gardner's school, where Kezzie Coffin is," said Debby eagerly. " But I came on an errand, Prissie; talking of Judy made me near forget it. My grandmother sent me to ask if you might not come and keep me company at supper and stay an hour or so, for she and Grandfather are asked to take supper with Captain and Mrs. Folger. I do hope you will."

But Prissie was so troubled and excited over all that Debby had told her that she hardly knew what response she made to this pleasant invitation. Usually an invitation to Captain Swain's would have been accepted with delight, for the elderly couple liked nothing better than to welcome any of Debby's playmates; to give them a taste of unexpected dainties, to show them treasures Captain Swain had brought home from voyages to far ports; and, sometimes of a clear evening, to take them to the wooden platform on the top of the house to look at the stars through the captain's fine telescope.

But Prissie had murmured something about asking her mother's permission, and hearing this Debby darted off to find Mrs. Fowler who was well pleased that Prissie should accept.

"Come early, will you not, Prissie?" urged Debby. "Sally will cook the supper; and we can go on the roof and watch for distant sails."

Priscilla agreed with as much interest as she could command, and Debby started happily toward home to tell her grandmother that Prissie would arrive at an early hour.

Prissie watched Debby as the little girl scampered off, and then sat down on the kitchen doorstep to think over the startling news regarding Judy Coleman.

"Judy must have got up before sunrise to have brought the dory back," Prissie thought, with a thrill of admiration for her friend's ability to wake at so early an hour and be off to Quaise. But at the thought that Judy was to be sent away Prissie's thoughts grew troubled.

"It may well be that Mistress Coffin knows all that happened yesterday," she thought fearfully, half expecting to see Nickanoose, or even Mistress Coffin herself, come up the lane.

But the day passed; the hour arrived for Prissie to start for her visit to Debby Swain, and there was no news from Judy; and Prissie, wearing her neat Sunday gown of home-made blue linen, with a sunbonnet of the same material,

walked soberly off toward the Swain house, thinking more about Judy than of the pleasure of seeing Debby.

Debby was on the outlook for her visitor and came running to meet her.

" Grandma and the Cap'n have just started," she declared, " and 'tis a full hour before supper-time. What would you like best to do, Prissie? Whatever it is we'll do it!" and Debby clasped both hands about Prissie's arm and looked up at the older girl with such affectionate delight that Prissie smiled back, forgetting for the moment all her worry in regard to Judy.

" I'd like to go up to the roof, Debby," she replied, as Sally, the Swains' Indian servant, held open the door for the girls to enter the small hallway.

Debby was well pleased with this response, and after Priscilla had taken off her linen sunbonnet, Debby led the way to " the Walk," as the wooden platform, enclosed by a strong railing, at the top of the house was called. These " Walks " were built on the roofs of many of the houses, and were reached by a square hole cut through the apex of the roof. They commanded a good view of harbor and ocean, and when ships were ex-

pected afforded a good place to catch the first glimpse of their approach.

The " Walk " on Captain Swain's roof was one of the best outlooks on the island. A fine telescope was mounted there, and Debby and Prissie both delighted to look through it. It was a telescope made by Walter Folger, a friend and neighbor of the Swains and Fowlers; nor did either of the little girls ever marvel that the finest telescopes in America should be made on the island of Nantucket.

" You shall look first, Prissie," said Debby. " I'll swing it about toward the harbor. There's a craft in mid-channel now," and a moment later Prissie was at the telescope, her glance fixed eagerly upon a two-masted schooner whose sails were being set to catch the favoring wind.

" 'Tis almost as if I were on board myself! " she declared, as she noted one after another of the sailors, none of whom were known to her.

" What schooner is it, Prissie? " questioned Debby.

" I don't know. Oooh! 'Tis the Tory captain! " whispered Prissie, as the telescope showed her the stout figure and whiskered face of Captain Moore whom but yesterday she had

seen at Quaise; and a moment later Prissie shouted:

"Judy! Judy! Judy Coleman! Oh, Debby! Look you; tell me can it be Judy?" and she drew Debby to take her place at the telescope.

"It is surely Judy," declared Debby. "It must be that the schooner is sailing earlier than Mistress Coleman knew. Oh, Prissie! Judy is at the rail! 'Tis as if she were looking straight at us!" and Debby generously stepped back that Priscilla might again bring Judy near.

Eagerly Prissie looked at her friend: at Judy who stood on the deck of Captain Moore's vessel, her glance turned earnestly toward shore.

"Judy! Judy!" Priscilla whispered her friend's name over and over. "When will I see you again? Will I ever know what has happened since yesterday?"

Priscilla did not move from the telescope until, with every sail set, the schooner moved down the channel. She saw Judy wave her hand as if bidding her good-bye; and when she could no longer see the little figure at the schooner's rail Prissie sank down on the floor crying bitterly, and was not to be comforted by anything Debby could do or say.

"Oh, Prissie! Sally is calling us to supper. You must not feel so badly about Judy! Why, 'tis a fine thing to go away to school. I am to go myself when the seas are safe. My grandfather says so. Perhaps you, too, will go, Prissie! Would it not be fine if we could go together?" said Debby, as Prissie, a little ashamed that Debby should see her cry, and now doing her best to choke back her sobs, rose to her feet and followed Debby down the steep stairs from the roof, and then to the lower floor of the house to the dining-room where the silent Indian woman had spread a small table, set near a window, for the girls' supper.

Usually Priscilla was delighted to be a guest in this room with its walls of paneled wood, that had been brought from South America; its cupboard filled with delicate, thin cups and saucers, plates and pitchers, that Captain Swain had brought from his voyages to China and Japan.

On the high mantel stood two branch-like pieces of white coral, and an elephant made of black teakwood held the space between. But neither of these wonders nor the appetizing supper that Sally set before them could bring a smile to Priscilla's face or make her forget that Judy,

on a craft commanded by a Tory captain, was sailing away toward the port of Boston.

"Do you not like honey, Prissie?" pleaded Debby. "'Tis fine with hot biscuit," and sighed a little that her guest did not seem to notice that there were sugar cookies as well as cake on the table, and that there was hot chocolate to drink instead of milk.

"'Tis as if Prissie had these things every day, and I know she does not," thought Debby, a little resentful that Judy Coleman's unexpected departure should make Priscilla so silent and unappreciative.

Nevertheless Debby did her best to make her guest feel that Judy was sure to return; but not until she said: "She will prob'ly write you letters, Prissie," did Priscilla show any sign of cheerfulness.

"Why, so she will, Debby! It may be she wrote me a letter before she went on board the schooner, and told me all about ——"

Priscilla stopped quickly, but Debby supplied the end of her sentence: "About starting off so quickly? Of course she did, Prissie! Maybe the letter is at your house now. Will you not have a taste of cake, Prissie?" And now Prissie looked

at the bountifully spread table and realized that here were unexpected dainties; she sipped the chocolate with evident pleasure; she was helped to honey. A little smile crept over Debby's face as Prissie accepted a third sugar cooky; and when Captain and Mrs. Swain reached home they found the two girls happily occupied with a family of Japanese dolls, Debby's most treasured possession.

Sally was sent to see Priscilla safely home; nor did a single word pass between them. For as they left the Swains' house Priscilla's thoughts sped back to Judy. "I do hope she left a letter for me," she thought.

At the gate of her home Priscilla did not forget to thank Sally for seeing her safely home. The Indian woman's grunt of response was the only reply Priscilla expected; but the little girl could not see the smile of satisfaction on Sally's face as she strode off toward home, nor hear her muttered: "Prissie keep close mouth. She wise, like Indian." Henceforth Sally had a special liking for Priscilla.

CHAPTER X

"THE WILD GOOSE"

MRS. COLEMAN had long talked of sending Judy away to school, therefore no one excepting Priscilla was greatly surprised to know that, when a good opportunity arrived for Judy to be taken safely to Mistress Gardner, in Boston, she should have been started promptly off.

"'Tis said Mistress Coffin gives her a free passage," Mrs. Fowler told Prissie a few days after Judy left home; and this news troubled Prissie almost more than the fact of Judy's departure, and she at last had sufficient courage to resolve to call on Judy's mother.

"If Mistress Coleman knows of our Quaise visit she is sure to tell me, and to bid me stay at home in future," thought Priscilla as, nearly a week after Judy's departure, she rapped at Mrs. Coleman's door.

Judy's brother Edward, who was just Priscilla's age, opened the door and greeted her with a whispered question that made Prissie stare at him in amazement.

"Have you come for your letter?" he asked, glancing back over his shoulder to make sure that he was not overheard. "I have it safe in my pocket. Here 'tis. Why did you not come before? Judy said you would," and he thrust a folded paper into her hand just as his mother appeared behind him.

"Why dost thou keep chattering to Priscilla instead of bidding her enter?" Mrs. Coleman asked, and Edward scampered off without answering as his mother said: "Come thee in, Priscilla," in so friendly a tone that Prissie was sure Judy's mother knew nothing of her part in the Quaise adventure.

"If you please, Mistress Coleman, I did but call to ask about Judy. I have an errand at the market and must not linger."

Mrs. Coleman nodded approvingly. "There'll be no news of Judy for weeks, as things go now," she replied. "'Twas a pity to hurry her off before she could bid her friends good-bye, but kind Mistress Coffin came to tell me of the excellent opportunity. Cap'n Moore's wife sails with him this trip and would take Judy in her care, and at no expense. 'Twas indeed a neighborly act."

Priscilla listened to every word; apparently Judy's mischievous acts were not the reason for her sudden departure; and thanking Mrs. Coleman, who in a most friendly manner bade the little girl to come and see her again, Prissie bade her good-bye and hurried away eager to read the letter that she had thrust into her pocket.

Her way to the market led past the head of the wharf from which she and Judy had set forth for Quaise, and with a quick glance Prissie discovered that no one was about and the bench unoccupied, and she was sure there was no better place to read Judy's message.

Seating herself she drew the folded paper from her pocket and for a moment regarded it soberly; it was sealed with red wax, and that, to Priscilla, made it seem a most important document, and she opened it carefully. It was not very well written, nor were all the words spelled correctly; for in 1779 there were no schools on Nantucket Island, and while most of the children received some instruction at home, the families who could afford it sent their children to the mainland to receive their education in well-known schools. So Judy began her letter by writing: "Done be fritened Prizzie nobuddy noes about our sekrits

yu mus kepe on wachin fur signuls Ile write yu letters. Judy." And just below her name Judy had added another line to her letter: "Eddie never tells nuthin'."

Priscilla reread the note and then tore it in bits that went fluttering off toward the water. Judy was gone, but the worst had not happened since their secrets had not been discovered, she thought, as she sped off to do her errand at the market and hurry home, happier than she had been since she had watched Captain Moore's schooner with Judy on board sail down the channel.

But as the days passed and *The Wild Goose* did not return Prissie's thoughts were no longer occupied with puzzling over the hidden passage at Quaise, or in a vain endeavor to discover where the Indian, Nickanoose, was busying himself. She knew not what signals might be flying for British cruisers to profit by, for she could think only of her father and the safety of the big sloop that he commanded; and she became a daily visitor at Captain Swain's that she might turn the big telescope toward the waters of the Sound and watch for the familiar craft. But June was at hand, provisions more and more difficult to obtain, and Mistress Coffin's prices almost impos-

sible to meet, when Prissie awoke one morning to the sound of her father's familiar voice.

With due caution he had made port on the evening tide. "Thou canst feast of molasses to thy heart's content, Prissie," he said as the delighted little girl clung to his arm, eager for him to tell her all his adventures of the past month, for he had briefly owned to a narrow escape from an English cruiser, but Captain Fowler declared that he had no time to waste. "I must land my cargo and make sure of it. Good flour, sugar, vinegar and molasses, as well as a package of spices, rice, and raisins are too valuable to be left uncared for," he said as he finished his breakfast and was off to his sloop.

"I'd well like to take a voyage in *The Wild Goose,*" said Prissie thoughtfully, as she helped her mother wash the dishes, rubbing the pewter plates until they gleamed like silver, and setting them carefully in the corner cupboard.

"Talk not of such foolishness, Priscilla," responded Mrs. Fowler in a sharper tone than she generally used to her little daughter. "I do not hold with girls leaving their homes; surely not in these dangerous days."

"Then I'll never go away to school as Judy

has, and as Debby Swain plans to do when America has driven England's ships from these seas," complained Prissie.

" To be sure you will not. Have I not taught thee to read, to write a neat hand, and to add figures? And thou canst sew and knit as well as any girl in Sherburne, if I did teach thee. Whatever is this about leaving Nantucket? " and Mrs. Fowler turned an anxious glance at Prissie, only to find the little girl doing her best not to laugh aloud.

" I fooled thee well, did I not? " she exclaimed delightedly. " I'd not leave the island if I could help it, you may be sure, Mother," and Priscilla went skipping about the pleasant room thinking herself quite the happiest little girl on Nantucket Island now that *The Wild Goose* was safely at anchorage, and her father saying he would not leave port, except for blue-fishing, until after sheep-shearing.

Shearing day, that lightened thousands of sheep of their heavy fleeces, had been a great island holiday until the Revolution; and even in 1779, when conditions were so difficult, the Nantucket people did their best to keep up the time-honored festival; and Priscilla and Debby, as

well as all the other children and young people of the island, were looking eagerly forward to the day when all Sherburne, in its "best bib-and-tucker," would set forth for the Common, near the clear waters of Miacomet, where the sheep would be washed and sheared.

The flocks would be gathered into pens not far from the lake, ready for the shears; there would be tents and awnings of canvas, each family bringing food enough for its own wants and for any unexpected visitor who might appear. And Priscilla was glad indeed that her father, with a cargo of food, had arrived in time for the island holiday.

It was Nantucket's boast that they reared the best sheep in the American Colonies; and this year, although the flocks were much smaller than in earlier years, there were some ten thousand head to be sheared.

"Will you make tarts with jelly filling, Mother? And molasses cake? And surely pot-cheese; 'tis so good with thick cream! And a rice pudding filled with raisins! Oh, Mother! May not we ask the Colemans and the Swains to share our feast, since Father has brought home so much?" urged Priscilla.

"We will indeed," Mrs. Fowler responded. "'Tis a good plan, and it may be Mistress Swain will bring pewter enough for us all. She has enough of it to outfit a ship. You can run up there now, Prissie, and tell them of your father's return, and say that we'll drop in for an evening visit come sunset."

"And may I bid them to share our shearing-day feast on the Common?" questioned Prissie hopefully; but Mrs. Fowler shook her head.

"No, Prissie. 'Tis your father who will ask the pleasure of their company. And see to it that you make no brags of what we will cook for shearing day."

"May I not tell Debby?" pleaded Prissie.

"No indeed. 'Tis not good manners to talk of your possessions, nor of your food. Say naught of such things; but remember to ask if Mistress Swain be better of her rheumatism."

"Yes'm," Priscilla promised, a little disappointed that she could not share her pleasant anticipations with Debby, who, as usual, came running to meet her.

"'Tis said news has come from Judy Coleman," Debby exclaimed eagerly. "One of Mistress Coffin's vessels brought a lot of letters, and

one was from Judy. And my grandma says 'tis plain Judy is an ungrateful child since she writes her mother that she hates and despises going to school!"

"But of course she would!" declared Prissie, "unless it was a school on Nantucket. I'm glad I don't have to go. Was that all Judy wrote?"

"'Twas all my grandma spoke of," replied Debby.

Instantly, at the mention of Judy's name, Priscilla's thoughts had fled back to their adventures: to Judy's letter commanding her to watch out "fur signuls," and Prissie wondered what her friend would think of her for having so nearly forgotten what they had so earnestly planned to do.

"You've never been off the island, have you, Debby?" she said, when a little silence fell between them as they drew near the Swain house, and Debby's reply made Prissie stare at her in amazement, for Debby had nodded and said:

"Oh, yes!"

"Why, Debby! I didn't know it. When did you go?" questioned the surprised Priscilla.

"One day last summer," responded Debby, as if leaving Nantucket was something of small im-

portance. "Grandpa and I were at Brant Point," she continued, "and I took off my shoes and stockings and waded right off!" And now it was Debby's turn to be surprised, for Priscilla was laughing so that she could not speak.

"Well, Prissie, I did," she repeated good-humoredly; and, remembering that Debby was only nine years old, Prissie only nodded in response. But her thoughts fled to the clever Judy. "Debby's nice to play with, but I do wish Judy would come home. Perhaps she will if she hates school," thought Priscilla hopefully.

CHAPTER XI

SHEARING DAY

The morning of "Shearing Day" proved clear and pleasant, and at an early hour Priscilla and her mother, both dressed in their Sunday best, were at the gate waiting for the cart in which they would ride to the Common. Captain Fowler had left home hours earlier, carrying the supply of food, to help his neighbors in the work of putting up tents, and making necessary arrangements.

From their stand at the front gate Prissie could see a little procession of carts and people winding their way along the sandy road leading to the Common, and down the lane came the Swains' cart with Mrs. Swain driving the stocky brown horse, and Debby, in a dress of yellow linen and a white sunbonnet, seated beside her. She waved gaily to Priscilla, and the two-wheeled cart came to a stop beside the gate, greetings were exchanged, and Mrs. Fowler and Prissie climbed to their seats, and, with a word from Mrs. Swain to the stout horse, they rolled smoothly down the

lane. Debby turned in her seat to tell Priscilla that she had looked through the telescope just before leaving home and had seen a large sloop rounding Brant Point. "Grandfather said it might be bringing visitors from Martha's Vineyard to the shearing," she said.

But Mistress Swain shook her head doubtfully. "'Tis far more likely to be a troublesome cruiser," she said, "and if it prove so we'll hope they'll put out of harbor without landing."

"'Tis said Cap'n Coffin's ship is well overdue! What think you he'll say to all this business of Miriam's?" asked Mrs. Fowler.

"Cap'n John will put a stop to all these mysterious craft coming into harbor with cargoes for Miriam's shop," she declared. "He is honest, as we all know; and, though Miriam be a pattern housewife, she has too eager a hand for coin," responded Mrs. Swain, with a little nod as if nothing more was to be said.

They were soon in sight of the blue waters of Lake Miacomet, and could hear the calls of the men busy with the difficult task of shearing the sheep. Mrs. Coleman was already arrived, and Edward promptly took charge of the Swains' horse and cart. He nodded to Prissie and, in a

half-whisper, said, "Letter for you," and a moment later the watchful Prissie saw him stoop as if to pick up something from the grass. But he did not again look toward her as he went quickly on.

Mrs. Fowler and Mrs. Swain had followed Mrs. Coleman to their tent to spread the table for the noonday feast, and Debby was looking about for a safe place to conceal her hated sunbonnet, so for the moment Prissie was alone, and she ran forward to the place where Edward had stopped and seized the folded letter that was held to the ground by a sharp stick. She had just time to thrust it into her pocket when Debby was close beside her exclaiming:

"What hast thou found, Prissie?" and without waiting for a reply continued: "Hurry, Prissie. The Macy children and the Pikes are waiting for us to play games. Hide-and-seek, maybe. Hurry!" and Debby raced back to the group of children gathered near one of the tents.

But Prissie did not follow her; with an unread letter from Judy Coleman in her pocket a game with other children had little interest. "I must get out of sight or they'll call me," she thought,

PRISCILLA CROUCHED BEHIND AN OLD CART

glancing quickly about her for a possible hiding-place; and, slipping behind a cart that stood near, she crouched down until the group of children moved away, intent on their noisy game. "I'll put off to the woods," resolved Prissie, keeping on toward the rear of the circle of tents.

On the eastern side of the Common there was a stretch of woodland. The trees were of no great height, but grew closely together, and Prissie knew that if she could reach these woods she could easily hide and read her treasured letter in safety.

Fortunately for her plan Debby and the other children were in the midst of a noisy game, and did not miss her; the elder people were all occupied in friendly visits from tent to tent, and no one noticed the little figure fleeing across the open space between the sheep pens and the woods; and Prissie, warm and breathless, sank down in the shadow of the trees with a little exclamation, tore open the folded paper and began eagerly to read; but she had only read the opening words when the sound of footsteps, of someone moving about in the woods, made her again hide her treasured letter in the deep pocket of her linen gown.

"Whoever it may be will ask 'Who is thy letter from?' and 'What does Judy say?' I'll never ask questions when I grow up," thought Priscilla, hoping that whoever it was would go on without seeing her, and then realized there were two people and that they were just beyond a thick growth of bushes.

Priscilla's first impulse was to jump up and run back to the circle of tents; to do that, however, would mean that Judy's letter would remain unread for hours to come. "Maybe whoever it is will be off themselves in a moment," she thought; but the voices were so near that she was sure they would hear her every movement, so she kept as still as possible, and wondered who it was speaking.

"'Tis not a Sherburne man, but 'tis not a strange voice," thought Priscilla, wishing it were possible for her to get a glimpse of the people behind the bushes. "He's saying poetry about sheep!" she thought, eagerly listening after hearing: "They drive the troubled flocks ——"

But the unknown voice lowered its tone, and Prissie could only hear an occasional word until the speaker reached the end of his stanza:

"—At last, of snowy white, the gathered flocks
Are in the wattled pen innumerous pressed
Head above head: and, ranged in lusty rows,
The shepherds sit and whet the sounding shears ——"

and a laugh ended the poetic lines.

"'Tis as good for Nantucket as for old England, eh, Geoffrey?" Prissie heard the gruffer of the two unknown voices, and then the other, that was so vaguely familiar:

"Well, the island people have good courage to make a festival at a time like this; but let's get on, Carruth, or we'll be late for the feast and Mistress Coffin will think we are not coming," and with this there was the sound of breaking twigs, of bushes thrust aside, and before the astonished Priscilla could spring to her feet two men, as surprised as she was, were looking down at her, and it was Priscilla who spoke first.

"Lieutenant Geoffrey Burke of the good sloop *Magic!*" she said as if repeating a lesson.

"The little maid of the lookout signals!" exclaimed the younger of the two men, as Priscilla scrambled to her feet, "and a young rebel, if I mistake not," he added. "Why, 'twas a wonder I was not put in irons because of your tricks.

And I believed you a good Tory helping England's cause."

"'Tis no just cause that captures fisher-boats at sea, and that steals away food from helpless people," declared Prissie.

"What's this?" exclaimed Burke's companion. "Disloyalty on Nantucket to King George! And when Sir George Collier and Sir Henry Clinton have just agreed with your committee that if the island people remain neutral our cruisers will not trouble you," and the man frowned at Priscilla as if she were his greatest enemy.

But the young lieutenant was smiling, as if amused by the remembrance that he had cut away the signals set up for his own sloop.

"And I believed you a Tory maid," he said reproachfully. "I'll warrant you've had a hand in some of good Mistress Coffin's worries of late, if the truth were known," he continued. "I'd best take you straight to her now and tell her of our first meeting, and that I found you lurking in the woods here, as if spying upon us."

"'Tis full likely!" declared Carruth. "Folger and Starbuck and their fine committee promised that the island will not take sides either with

England or America, since they are not defended in their rights by either, and are helpless to protect themselves; but it may well be this little maid has been sent to spy on us. Take her to Mistress Coffin, who has more brains than 'tis safe for one woman," and Carruth grasped Prissie's arm so firmly that she knew it was no use to try to pull away.

"Come on! We must not be late for a share of all the good things at Mistress Coffin's table. A cup of good tea will not be amiss," he said, starting toward the Common at so fast a pace that Priscilla nearly lost her footing; but she managed to say:

"Nantucketers will not drink tea!" for she knew that Britain's cargoes of tea, thrust upon its American colonies under unjust taxation, was one of the causes of the war; and she had heard more than one Nantucket woman declare that not until American rights were established should tea be served in their homes.

As she spoke Carruth's grasp tightened, and he gave her a pull forward so suddenly that Priscilla stumbled and nearly fell.

"I've a mind to take her on board ship," he grumbled, but the young lieutenant laughed at

his companion's wrath at so small an enemy of King George.

"I'll look out for her," he declared; "let go your grip on the child's arm, Carruth! Where do you think she could go if you did not hold her?"

Carruth loosened his hold, and for a few paces Priscilla walked on beside him. She was becoming more and more alarmed. If these English sailors led her to Mistress Coffin with the story of the signals; if they repeated her bold words against England's injustice, Priscilla knew not what might befall her. In some way she must escape. Every step was bringing them nearer the circle of tents; at any moment they might be seen and Mr. Peleg Coffin, Captain Swain, or even Miriam Coffin herself come forward to greet the strangers. "And Judy's letter! Who knows what Judy may have written! And they would surely read it!" thought Priscilla, growing more and more afraid. And then she was off, with a mad rush across the pasture that gave her a good start before either of the men could be after her. Their loud shouts only spurred Priscilla to a more rapid pace, nor did she look back until long after the sound of the sailors' voices had ceased, and

when, nearly out of breath, hot, tired, and almost expecting to see Carruth reaching out to seize her, she sank down in a little hollow in the sandy pasture, and realized that she could not see the tents or hear any sound from the holiday-makers.

A little breeze drifted over her; a song-sparrow swayed on some tall grass almost within her reach and sang fearlessly. From the beach not far away Priscilla could hear the even surge of the tide, and for a little while she lay there, too tired to even wonder at what had befallen her or to even remember that Judy Coleman's letter was in her pocket.

CHAPTER XII

DANGER

Lying in the secluded hollow on the warm grass Prissie at last remembered the letter in her pocket, drew it out, and, with a little smile of satisfaction, began to read. She was no longer afraid of pursuit; she was likewise sure that, in the crowd of children and all that her mother would find to do, her absence might not be noticed for some time to come, and she was well pleased to be alone in this quiet, restful nook where she could give her full attention to Judy's letter.

Although there was no improvement in spelling, Judy's letter was easy for Priscilla to read and understand; it was chiefly about all that Judy had seen in Boston; of the tall beacon on the top of Beacon Hill, not far from the big house of Mr. John Hancock, where sixty guests could dine in the spacious dining-hall. Judy had even seen Mr. Hancock driving out in his fine chariot attended by four mounted servants.

" 'Tis said he is to be governor of the State,

now that the war is nerely over," wrote Judy, "but 'tis tru he is moar like a king. Mr. Samuel Adams, who Mistruss Gardner says is as great a patriot as General Washington, likes not all the display of coaches and servants."

Priscilla stopped reading for a moment, her glance resting on the quiet, fragrant moors. "'Tis as if Judy were forgetting Nantucket," she thought; "she says naught of hating school;" but as she read on her face brightened, and she nodded her head in approval, for after writing of attending church, and of the "strange way that Boston ladies do their hair over high cushions on top of their heds," Judy wrote: "'Tis all verry grand, Prizzie, but 'tis not Nantucket an' I wisht I was home."

"Of course she does, poor Judy," thought Prissie, sorry indeed that her friend should be in exile.

Judy's letter ended by asking Prissie to write to her, if there should be any chance of sending a letter from Nantucket, and by saying: "Folks say that sune the war will end and the English go back to England. But watch fur signuls. Judy."

"I wish I could show Judy's letter to Mother,"

thought Prissie. "She would like well to read all Judy tells of Boston and its fashions." But nevertheless Priscilla tore the letter into tiny bits; those last words, "watch fur signuls," and the fact that Judy had sent it through Edward, convinced Prissie that the fact of receiving a letter from Judy must be kept secret.

As the last bit of paper fluttered away Priscilla ventured to stand up and look off toward the shearing grounds. "'Tis likely dinner is well over," she thought regretfully, "but it may be I'll not miss a taste of it if those Englishmen do not stay too late," and Prissie now turned to look seaward, and toward the long sandy point that ran toward Tuckernuck Island.

A large sloop lay offshore, and, as Prissie wondered if it might not be *The Magic,* its jib shot up to catch the wind, its big mainsail was hoisted, and the sloop was headed toward the shore.

"'Tis as if a signal had been set for them," thought Prissie; "at any rate 'tis surely Lieutenant Burke's sloop, and full likely he and the man who would have taken me prisoner will go on board. 'Twill not do for me to start back now. I might even meet them face to face on

their way to the shore," and Priscilla now faced about toward the moors, and instantly realized a new danger: for coming directly toward her, and already near enough for her to be sure who it was, strode the young lieutenant with the sailor Carruth beside him.

"And they have seen me!" she exclaimed, as she noticed the men stop for a moment, and then quicken their pace toward her.

"This time they'll take me prisoner," was Priscilla's first thought, quickly followed by "if they can catch me!" She had outrun them once, and, after her long rest in the grassy hollow, was sure she could again.

"I'll wait until they are so near that they will not think of my trying to escape," she resolved, and Carruth had indeed reached out to grasp her before Priscilla darted forward, running past the surprised sailors with such swiftness that they looked after her in amazement.

"Give it up, Carruth! We might as well run after a fish-hawk," exclaimed the lieutenant. "And we must get off by this tide or be delayed for hours. Let her go. She's but a little maid, and belike her meddling with our signals may have been but a child's mischief."

"More likely some rebel against the king sent her to thwart our capturing the Yankee craft," muttered Carruth. "We should have bidden Mistress Coffin look out for the girl. If we carried her off we'd soon find out who sent her."

"Mistress Coffin has her own troubles just now, I fancy, and 'tis folly to think a little maid of such importance," responded Burke, as, with a last glance at the little figure fleeing across the moors, the men turned and made their way toward the shore.

"Oh, Prissie! You are almost too late! Or didst thou eat thy dinner with the Starbuck children? I called thee, and Edward Coleman bade me stop my noise!" declared Debby, as Priscilla, flushed and tired from her race across the moor, appeared at the door of the tent.

"Where is my mother?" she asked anxiously.

"She is with my grandma and Mistress Macy and others looking at the fine wool. 'Tis said to be the best for years," replied Debby.

"I haven't had a bite, and I'm choking!" declared Priscilla, sinking down on a box that stood near the table where remnants of the feast remained.

"I'll get thee a drink of tamarind water. Here's a pitcher nigh full!" exclaimed Debby, well pleased to wait on her friend. "And here is some cold meat, Prissie, and a plate of pound cake. Mistress Coffin sent the cake to Mistress Coleman; it has citron in it!"

Prissie nodded, too tired to talk and too hungry to waste time in asking questions. She drank the delicious tamarind water gratefully. It was made by putting the bitter-sweet, sticky tamarinds, kegs of which were brought by every captain who returned from a West India cruise, into a pitcher or bucket and turning cold water over them, making a refreshing drink well liked by all.

Debby brought her freshly baked bread and new butter, a tumbler of cranberry jelly, as well as a supply of sliced lamb; she pushed the pound cake near enough for Prissie to reach it easily, and kept the pewter mug filled with tamarind water, chattering on of all the games of the morning.

"I tried to find thee twice, Prissie, truly I did. But Edward Coleman sent me the wrong way when I asked if he had seen thee," declared Debby, as if excusing some fault of her own.

"'Tis all right, Debby," Prissie assured her. "But who were Mistress Coffin's guests?"

"Two officers from a British cruiser, so Edward Coleman says; and they ate the best of the feast. Edward says their sloop has chased more than one Nantucket craft, and that 'twas a shameful thing for them to eat our food," said Debby, and then exclaimed: "There go some of the carts toward Sherburne, and my grandma is coming to gather up the food. Put a piece of cake in thy pocket, Priscilla."

Priscilla promptly obeyed, and was quite ready to help Mistress Swain and her mother, who came a moment later, put the food into baskets to take home; for they well knew that the remains of their feast might have to last many a family for days to come.

Mrs. Fowler had supposed Priscilla to be with some party of children, and now finding her with Debby in their own tent, had no questions to ask, taking it for granted that her little daughter had enjoyed the day in safety.

As they drove off toward home Prissie was unusually quiet; not only was she tired, but she feared that the two English sailors had carried out their threat and described her, and told of

what she had done, to Mistress Coffin. "And they know my name," she told herself, and was little comforted by that remembrance.

Beside being anxious Prissie wanted to tell someone of what had befallen her. "I haven't had any games, and nearly lost having a bite to eat. I was just hiding and running away all day," she thought, beginning to feel a little sorry for herself; but recalling how cleverly she had twice escaped from her pursuers a little smile crept over her face. "I can write to Judy about it, and I'll give the letter to Edward; he's sure to know how to send it," she thought, and then realized that Debby, seated beside her in the back of the Swains' cart, was waiting for an answer to a question.

"Will you, Prissie?" she repeated, and added: "Twice have I asked you if you will come up tomorrow night and look through the telescope, but the cart rattles so you did not hear."

"Surely I will come if my mother consents. But what ship are you watching for?" replied Prissie.

"Oh! Grandpa says Cap'n Coffin's ship is overdue long since, so we always hope to see that; but 'tis to look at the stars, Prissie, that I want

thee to come. Grandfather says if the night be clear that Ceres, goddess of the harvest, will be seen with an ear of shining corn in her left hand. Would you not well like to see such a sight?"

Priscilla agreed that she would like nothing better. "But I am glad 'tis not to-night. I never was so tired," she said, as the cart drew up before her own gate, and she and her mother bade the Swains good-night.

CHAPTER XIII

A DAY OF PEACE

At an early hour Priscilla climbed the stairs to her little chamber over the front door. It had one window that looked down the lane. The narrow bed stood under the slope of the roof; a small light-stand was placed near the window, and there was a rush-bottomed chair and a cricket, and a rag rug stretched in front of the bed. But plain and simple as it was, Priscilla was well pleased with her room; she swept and dusted it, and made the bed each morning; she had helped to make the hooked rug that lay in front of her bed, and also the white tufted spread, and on the night after " Shearing Day " she was glad to be alone in the little chamber.

But tired as she was with the events and dangers of the day Priscilla did not at once go to sleep. She was puzzled and a little alarmed by the happenings of the day, and, as she lay in her comfortable bed with the soft fragrant air drifting in through the open window, she not only repeated to herself all that Judy had written, but

she recalled the threats of Carruth, and the hour was late before she drifted into slumber, and when she awoke the June sun was high in the heavens, and her mother was looking in at the open door.

"Well, Prissie! I called thee twice, and began to think you had flown out of the window," said Mrs. Fowler smilingly, as she entered the room carrying a small tin tub filled with warm water. A large rough, hand-woven towel hung from the back of the rush-bottomed chair, and a square cake of home-made soap was in the drawer of the light-stand.

"Jump up, Prissie. Thy fresh clothes are in the closet, and put on thy old gingham, for strawberries are ripe in the hill field and I want you to gather them before the town children search them out," she said, and Prissie, a little reluctantly in spite of the late hour, stepped out of bed and tested the warmth of the water a little doubtfully, wondering why it was that her mother believed a small tin tub filled with fresh water was so much better for bathing than an ocean of salt water creeping up a sandy beach, into which one could run at a moment's notice—"If Mother would let me," Prissie added, as she drew her

faded gingham from the closet and made ready to go down-stairs.

Her simple breakfast of corn-meal porridge and milk, and a small dish of wild strawberries, was quickly eaten.

"You need not help me with the dishes this morning, Prissie, and you can put your room in order when you come home. 'Tis best to take no chances about the strawberries," said Mrs. Fowler, handing Prissie a round, closely-woven basket made of the fragrant orange grass, and putting on her blue linen sunbonnet Priscilla started off for the field that lay on a slope to the rear of her home.

"'When the wind is in the east
'Tis good for neither man or beast,'"

Prissie repeated aloud, as a cloud drifted over the sun and a sharp breeze swept against her.

"Yesterday was too fine. 'Twas indeed a weather breeder, as Captain Swain said," thought Prissie, as she knelt in the grass to gather the ripe strawberries.

But the cloud floated away, the wind veered toward the south and the sun shone warmly down on the sea-engirted island, and before Prissie had

half filled her basket the June day was at its best —sunny, with clear skies and fragrant air.

"Hello, Prissie," she heard a familiar voice, and turned to find Edward Coleman near at hand with his basket heaped up with strawberries. "Did Judy bid thee give me a letter for her?" he asked. "I had no chance to ask thee yesterday when thou put off for the woods with such speed."

"Oh, Edward! Those English sailors were in the wood, and they said they had a mind to take me prisoner. Judy says you never tell things. You won't tell!" said Prissie, thinking it would be almost like having Judy at home if Edward would be her friend and keep her secrets.

Edward was a squarely built, sturdy boy with dark eyes and curly hair. He was nearly as brown as an Indian, and strong and capable as many boys much older. Although he was no older than Priscilla, Edward was already planning to go on a whaling voyage as soon as America's freedom from English rule should be established; and now as Priscilla questioned him the boy regarded her a little scornfully.

"'Tell'!" he repeated. "I'm not a parrot! But I'll send thy letters to Judy and say naught,"

he continued soberly. "And if I were on the mainland I'd do my best to help the American soldiers. My father says Boston is already clear of the English, and will make her own laws; but 'tis little Nantucket folks can do with Tory craft coming and going on every tide."

As Edward talked he had been picking berries and putting them into Prissie's basket, and he listened attentively to her story of her escape from the sailors; and she confided to him her fears that Mistress Coffin might discover that she was the girl of whom Lieutenant Burke had told.

"'Tis full likely they said naught of thee at all, Priscilla," Edward responded. "They may have thought it good sport to frighten a small maid; but I'll wager they'd be ashamed to tell that thee were too clever for them, and more than once!"

Priscilla's face brightened as she listened to this hopeful possibility, and, when Edward repeated his promise to forward a letter to Judy, she felt freer from worrying thoughts than since Judy's departure, and decided that she liked Edward nearly as well as she did Judy.

Mrs. Fowler was well pleased with the basket of berries. "'Tis good fortune I have sugar and

can preserve them," she said, " for 'twill be wise for us all to get a good store of food and fuel before another winter sets in."

" But, Mother! Winter is months away," laughed Priscilla, with no thought that the coming winter of 1780 would bring the greatest privations that Nantucket people had ever experienced.

But Edward Coleman's hopeful opinion regarding the Englishmen made Priscilla confident that she need have no fear of being troubled in future, and she began to think of the evening when she would visit Debby and, through the big telescope, would see the goddess of the harvest, Ceres, shining in the clear sky.

Captain Swain liked nothing better than to point out and describe the heavenly bodies, and Priscilla now remembered that Debby knew the names of many stars, and could tell their place in the heavens during the different months of the year.

Soon after supper Priscilla and her mother and father walked up the slope to the Swains' house.

The night was warm and clear, and as they came near the Swains' house Priscilla could see Debby sitting on the doorstep, and called out to

her, and Debby came running to meet and welcome them.

"And see, Prissie!" she exclaimed, as Captain Swain drew his guests into the sitting-room. "I have my Japanese dolls out to-night on purpose for you!" and Debby pointed to a low table where sat two beautiful little figures of Japanese ladies. Each one had the blackest hair possible, coiled and rolled on top of the head and held in place by pins of jade; they both had very small black eyes and very red cheeks, and they were both dressed in coat-like garments of blue satin embroidered in gold and silver thread, and each one held a tiny fan.

In a moment Prissie was leaning over the table admiring these wonderful dolls, "Lotus-flower" and "Honeysuckle," as Debby's grandmother had named them when Captain Swain brought them from Tokio, Japan, when Debby was only a year old. Debby considered them too fine to play with as she played with her family of wooden dolls, but she liked to bring them out to show to other admiring little girls; and Priscilla now realized that this evening visit was a much more important occasion than she had expected, since "Lotus-flower" and "Honeysuckle" were

a part of it. And when Debby drew out the chest of lacquered wood, that had come from Japan with the dolls, and displayed all the silken garments with their wonderful embroideries, Priscilla no longer even remembered the big telescope on the housetop, or the stars they had come to see; but Captain Swain remembered, and, before Priscilla had seen, though not for the first time, half the treasures of the chest, he bade Debby put away her dolls and to follow him to the look-out, and instantly the little girls obeyed.

"'Tis a mild and pleasant evening, and no trace of fog," said Mistress Swain, as she stepped out on the railed in "Walk" on top of the house. "If we could but have the good fortune to see Cap'n Coffin's ship coming in to harbor 'twould be better even than star-gazing," she said, looking out over the quiet harbor.

"It would indeed!" agreed Captain Fowler, while Captain Swain adjusted the big telescope, and declared that Priscilla must be the first to look through it.

There was a high, long-legged stool on which Debby often perched to gaze through the wonder-revealing telescope, and Captain Swain now lifted Priscilla to this seat. "Just give a look

out beyond Brant Point and see if there's any craft in sight," he suggested; but not even a distant sail could be seen, and Captain Swain began to point out and name the gleaming stars in the clear heavens.

"That clear sunlike star to the nor'west is Capella," he said, "and to the west of the meridian line is the constellation of Leo the Lion;" and the captain carefully directed Priscilla's gaze to the great star Regulus, and then to the curved blade of the Sickle. And at last, pointing toward the eastern boundary of Leo, he said:

"And there, Prissie, is Ceres, goddess of the harvest," and so clearly did the old captain describe the constellation of stars that formed a shining figure in the evening skies that Prissie always remembered it, and the brilliant white star Spica, that marked the ear of corn that Ceres carried in her left hand.

Then it was Debby's turn to look, and later on the older members of the party searched the distant waters with hopeful eyes, more interested to look for the sail of some homeward-bound ship than to watch the beauty of distant stars.

It was late when Prissie and her mother and father bade their friends good-night and turned

homeward. Not a light was to be seen from any of their neighbors' houses; the cool air from the sea drifted over the moors, and not even the call of a sea-bird broke the fragrant stillness of the June evening.

"I had a better time to-night than I did yesterday. I'll write Judy about it. Perhaps she can see the same stars I see, even if she is in Boston," thought Priscilla, as she bade her father and mother good-night and climbed the stairs to her little chamber.

CHAPTER XIV

A SURPRISE

During the evening visit with the Swains Priscilla's father and Captain Swain had spoken of the young Frenchman, Lafayette, only twenty-one that year, 1779, who was giving his services to the cause of America, and of the arrival of the French fleet of thirty-seven ships under D'Estaing; and, on the following day, thinking over the events of the evening, Priscilla remembered this, and that 6,000 French soldiers and 2,000 guns were now ready to help the Americans.

"That surely means the British will not trouble us much longer," Priscilla thought hopefully, remembering that Judy had written that, since their expulsion from Boston in the first year of the war, the British had never regained their foothold upon the mainland of New England. She began to write to Judy, describing the sheep-shearing, her unexpected meeting with Lieutenant Geoffrey Burke and the sailor Car-

ruth. "Your brother Edward is sure they will not speak of me to Mistress Coffin," wrote Prissie, wondering if Judy had indeed been right in thinking Mistress Coffin suspected her in regard to the signals, and she ended her letter with a promise to do her best that no friendly signal to a British ship should wave from Nantucket Island if she could possibly help it.

Within a few days Priscilla found a chance to give Edward her letter. He told her that one of Mistress Coffin's packets was sailing to Boston soon, and that Prissie's letter should be sent with his mother's.

"There'll be fine news to send Judy ere long," he declared. "'Tis said at the wharves and in the market-place that small craft, gunwale deep, are landing on the evening tides near Quaise, and though boxes and bales be taken on shore by the sailors they go not near the house. 'Tis a strange matter, and the Selectmen say there must be a cave there ——"

"A cave! 'Tis a passage!" exclaimed Prissie. "A passage dug through the hill to the house!"

Edward stared at her in amazement, and Prissie now realized that not even to her trusted brother had Judy told of all they had discovered

on their adventurous day at Quaise; but she also remembered that Judy had said that Edward never told secrets, and she went on to tell of the secret passageway through which she had made her way to Mistress Coffin's kitchen, and of what she had overheard.

"Thou must tell this to the Selectmen!" Edward eagerly responded. "Indeed thou must, Prissie. 'Tis said openly that Mistress Coffin is a smuggler, bringing in all manner of things that she makes us pay outrageous prices for if we would not starve. She flaunts her wealth like a grandee, while many of her neighbors go hungry, and at the last meeting at the Town House she was denounced. Thou must tell Mr. Frederic Folger; he is Town Clerk, and will know what to do."

"No, Edward! I shall not tell. Nor must you. 'Tis my secret, and you cannot tell!" insisted Priscilla, looking anxiously at Edward's sober face.

"I did not promise thee, and thou didst not ask me to promise that I would keep silent," declared Edward, but he added quickly, as if thinking to himself, "Nevertheless I cannot tell a secret unless 'tis understood that I do."

Priscilla nodded approvingly. "Of course you cannot, Edward. Oh!" she ended in surprise, for a firm hand had descended on her shoulder and she turned to look up into the face of Timothy Folger whose other hand held Edward securely.

"Thou wilt have a chance to tell just what sort of a secret it is that thee knows regarding passageways and hiding-places at Quaise," he said. "Our new Selectmen will not be connivers with Tories, and henceforth Nantucket people will not be made to pay extortionate prices for unlawful goods," and as he talked Mr. Folger turned from the center of the town drawing the two children along with him; and as they neared Long Wharf both Priscilla and Edward wondered what would now befall them; but after the interchange of a glance neither of them spoke.

About half-way down the pier a small group of men were gathered, and Mr. Folger stopped in front of them and said: "Out of the mouth of children cometh truth; tell thy story, little maid."

"Tell them, Priscilla," said Edward, and, remembering the fine houses of Mistress Coffin, her gowns of heavy silks, the shelves, in what had

once been her parlors but were now her shop, loaded with costly dry-goods and with all manner of merchandise that her needy neighbors were mortgaging their simple homes to pay for, Priscilla did not hesitate but began to tell of the visit that she and Judy had made to Quaise and what they had discovered.

When she finished the little group were silent, their faces grave, and it was Mr. Folger who spoke:

"'Tis full time we resisted our oppressors. Henceforth let every Nantucket citizen abstain from any dealings with Miriam."

"That's not enough," declared one of the group. "Here is a little maid who can lead us straight to the very stronghold of the Tory smugglers, and the sooner the better. Let to-night be the time. 'Tis best to go by land," he added.

"But 'tis not a fit expedition for this little maid," objected Mr. Folger, "nor would Cap'n Fowler permit it. She can tell us clearly of the place, and she, and Edward here, must vow on their honor to say not one word of this plan. Now, little maid, tell us again of the hidden passageway," and again Priscilla carefully described the place where she and Judy had landed; told

of the little slope up which she had climbed, and of the trap-door she had discovered.

"'Twill be easy to find," declared the young man who had suggested the expedition, "and we'll be on hand to-night. Now, little maid, what is your name? And yours, young sir?"

"Priscilla Fowler."

"Edward Elisha Coleman," came the prompt response.

"Then listen, and repeat after me," he said. "In the presence of these people assembled I solemnly vow and declare that I will speak no word of their plan. If I do may I be taken a prisoner by the British and perish miserably!"

The young man's threatening glance rested on Priscilla as she whispered the words over after him. "Now you, young man!" he said turning to Edward.

"I will not tell of thy plan," said the boy, meeting the man's glance with no evident fear.

"Then repeat what I bid you," warned the man.

"'Tis a foolish vow. I have said I will not tell," said Edward.

A little chuckle was heard among the group, and Mr. Folger smiled approvingly.

"He will keep his promise, a boy to be trusted," he said. "And now be off, both of you, and forget each and every one of us," and almost before he had finished speaking Priscilla and Edward had turned and were racing up the wharf, nor did they stop until they reached Liberty Street.

"I'd well like to go to Quaise," said Priscilla, breathless, and still half frightened by the vow she had taken, as they stopped for a moment's rest.

"I am going," Edward announced. "I'll follow without their even guessing it, and maybe I'll go through the passage. I'll tell you about it to-morrow!" and before Priscilla could say a word in response Edward had darted off down the lane that led to his home.

For a moment Priscilla stood still gazing after him; she was still a little dazed and puzzled by her unexpected encounter with Mr. Folger, and by all that had so quickly followed after, and she now wished earnestly that Judy had been with her instead of Edward.

"If it had been Judy she would have said that we would both go, and she would have thought of a way," thought Priscilla, and then: "If Ed-

ward can go I see no reason why I may not." But she quickly remembered that Mr. Folger had said that her father would never permit her to lead the men on so adventurous an excursion, and with a little sigh Priscilla turned toward home.

The day was warm with little trailing wisps of fog creeping in from the ocean, and more than once that afternoon Mrs. Fowler wondered why Priscilla kept wandering down to the gate to look seaward.

"The children, even, begin to fear that any favoring wind may bring the enemy upon us," thought Mrs. Fowler, for there were rumors that a squadron of English armed vessels were preparing to leave New York for the purpose of plundering Nantucket, and of burning it if any resistance was made by its inhabitants. Mrs. Fowler was sure that her little daughter's uneasiness must be caused by these rumors, and she once or twice spoke of the fact that the wind was easterly, and that no ship could make harbor until it changed.

But Priscilla was not thinking of favoring winds, or of dangers of an attack upon Sherburne; she was wondering if it might not, after

all, be possible for her to go to Quaise and see the great events that she was sure would happen there. "If Edward can follow without being seen, as he said he could, why so can I," thought Prissie; "but 'tis as Mr. Folger declared, my mother and father would never let me, though it might well be that the men cannot find the door to the passage without my help," and before sunset Prissie had made up her mind. She, too, would visit Quaise that night.

"And it may be I'll have as much to tell Edward Coleman as he will have to tell me," she thought, with a little chuckle, as she imagined how surprised Edward would be when she should tell him that she had been one of the members of the secret expedition.

"And I must be off before dusk gathers," she resolved, "and hide among the bushes just beyond the town; then when the men pass I'll follow."

CHAPTER XV

MISTRESS COFFIN'S GUESTS

PRISCILLA'S mother and father slept downstairs in a chamber opening from the sitting-room, and Priscilla knew that it would be an easy matter for her to leave the house at an early hour without their knowledge. The summer evening had hardly deepened into dusk when Priscilla slipped out of the back door, ran through the field where she had gathered the earliest strawberries, and, avoiding the streets and lanes, made her way to the outskirts of the town in the direction toward Quaise.

Once or twice the sound of approaching footsteps sent her scurrying to the shelter of wayside bushes where she would peer out at the passer-by, and when she had recognized two of these as members of the group on the wharf, she realized that she must go with even more precautions against discovery.

"They'd surely send me straight home," she whispered, and now kept a sharp outlook through

the gathering shadows as she ran on, stopping now and then to listen.

"I must be either late or too early, for but three men have passed," she thought, as she drew near the knoll on which stood Mistress Coffin's country house. "'Tis likely Edward came before sunset and is safely hidden on the harbor-side of the hill," and Prissie was about to step out from behind the scrubby little pine where she had stopped for a moment's rest and to look sharply about, when a murmur of voices near at hand made her again crouch down in the deeper shadow: and not a moment too soon, as she quickly realized, for a group of men, carrying lances and harpoons for weapons, were marching directly past her hiding-place, making no effort at quiet or concealment.

"There's twenty of them!" gasped the astonished girl and was again about to follow when she saw a small figure running swiftly over the sandy road.

"'Tis Edward!" she whispered. "What would he say if I jumped out from behind this bush!" But Prissie did not jump, nor did she follow after the shadowy figures that were moving in the direction of the house.

"They're going the wrong way," she thought, as she turned toward the wooded slope beyond the house.

The shadows of evening were deepening into darkness as Prissie made her way among the bushes and wind-swept trees. More than once she stumbled and fell, and it became more and more difficult for her to be sure of the direction she was taking. The east wind of the afternoon continued; dark clouds now and then swept across the moon, and the boom of the surf tumbling in on the outer beach sounded louder than the little girl had ever believed possible as she pushed her way on until she was sure she was on the sandy slope that led to the beach.

"The trap-door must be near," she decided, trying her best to see through the darkness; and at that moment hearing a noise that rose clearly above the roar of the sea: "'Tis a sail flapping in the wind," thought Prissie; "it must be a smuggler's craft," and her quick ear now heard a low whistle that seemed to echo from place to place.

For the Nantucket men had made a careful plan, and were stationed at different points near the beach and along the slope, and the whistles

were the signal agreed on to be ready for action. When the boat laden with bundles, kegs, and boxes, crept in toward shore the Nantucket men were ready; and Prissie, forgetting the danger of discovery, was now at the brow of the sandy precipice peering over and watching the motions of the crew who were rapidly unloading their cargo, and carrying it up the slope.

"They're going to the passageway," thought Priscilla, and was almost at their heels, when there was a sudden rush through the bushes and a familiar voice called: "Halt there!"

But, before the assailants could reach the spot where the packages had been set down, packages and smugglers had alike vanished. Not a word had been spoken by these men, and but that Priscilla had told of the secret passageway the Nantucketers would have been puzzled to know where they had disappeared. But now no time was lost.

"They've gone down the passage the little maid told us of," Prissie heard a familiar voice declare, and the gleam of lanterns flickered close at hand as the Nantucket men ran through the underbrush, calling to each other as they vainly searched for the well-concealed entrance.

For a moment Priscilla hesitated. "Oh! The

smugglers will bar the big door behind them and escape through the kitchen," she thought; " 'tis now too late to follow them this way," and, forgetting that she had no wish to be discovered, she stumbled toward the nearest light calling out:

" There's a big door in the passage, half-way to the house; they'll bar that and keep you out. The house is the place to catch them. Hurry! Hurry!" For it now seemed to Priscilla that unless these men were caught some great misfortune would surely overwhelm all the loyal people of Nantucket, and without waiting for a response to her warning she was off toward the house.

Several of the men heard the call and the noise of Prissie's rush through the underbrush, but none of them realized who it was or whom they were following as they hastened after her. " 'Tis good one of us had the wit to start for the house," muttered one of the men, " but I have no memory that the little maid told us of a door in that passage."

" Nor can I place the man who called out," said his companion. " Tim Swan has a thin voice, and maybe 'twas his; but it sounded thin and too sharp for a man's."

" 'Tis because of trying to speak low, maybe," responded the first speaker; " but, whoever it be, he will be the one to thank if we get hold of the scoundrels," and they ran on, often so close at Priscilla's heels that only the underbrush and darkness prevented them from discovering that it was a little girl who was leading them.

But at the first sight of Mistress Coffin's house Prissie gave a startled exclamation, and then crouched low behind a sheltering tree, for every window blazed with light. " 'Tis as if there was a party!" whispered the little girl, hearing the rush of the Nantucket men as they ran forward.

" I can see and hear all that happens. I need not move," she thought, as she peered through the darkness of the summer night and saw the shadowy figures run toward the lighted house. She heard their raps on the stout outer door, and cried out in amazement when the door swung wide open and she saw, standing in the full blaze of the candle-lit hall, the tall figure of Mistress Coffin, dressed in some light shimmering gown that shone and sparkled as she curtseyed low in front of her surprised guests.

" 'Tis as if she were welcoming the great

Washington or the brave Frenchman Lafayette of whom Judy wrote," thought Priscilla, and creeping out from her hiding-place she ran forward until in the deep shadow of the house she was near enough to hear whatever was said, and, with the feeling that nothing so wonderful as this could ever again befall her, Prissie heard Mistress Coffin say:

" Welcome, *gentlemen!* Though you come so unexpectedly, and with less ceremony than I like, and batter upon my door in a needless manner, I am, as you see, ready for guests. Do me the honor of entering my poor house! " and again she curtseyed low, stepping back a little as if waiting for them to enter, while the men, many of them with weapons in their hands, stood gazing at her too amazed to speak.

But their silence was but for a moment.

" Cousin Coffin, we come in search of the enemies of our island, who have unlawfully landed their goods on your beach, and who must even now be concealed in thy house," said Timothy Folger, stepping forward, closely followed by his companions.

" Why do you imagine such an amazing tale? " asked the smiling woman. " Step in, *gentlemen;*

since you have come so far on a mistaken errand you had best take such refreshment as I can offer you."

"We want no hospitality from you, Miriam," was the quick response. "By your leave, however, we will visit your kitchen and see what we find there," and one by one the men entered the house.

Instantly Prissie fled along by the house to the kitchen door; through the unshuttered windows she saw the men enter the paneled kitchen.

"But where is the door to the passage?" she heard Timothy Folger exclaim in a puzzled tone as they hurriedly examined the walls that gave no sign of the well-concealed door. "We should have brought the little maid after all; she could have pointed out the entrance and ——"

But Mr. Folger had not time to finish his sentence; a little figure with flying hair appeared in the kitchen door, darted across the room, pressed on a panel that swung instantly open revealing the steps leading to the passageway, and the men with lanterns instantly disappeared down the stairway. Prissie had only time to swing the panel into place when the sound of steps told her that Mistress Coffin was near the

kitchen and the little girl fled toward the outer door just as Miriam entered the room.

"So they did not find what they were in search of, after all," she heard Mistress Coffin exclaim; for seeing the open kitchen door she believed the Nantucket men had walked through the house and departed.

For a little while Prissie sat quietly in the shadow of the now darkened house where every light was extinguished. She was very tired, and eager as she was to know if the smugglers had been captured she realized that she must not again venture up the slope. "I must start for home, but I'll rest a little while," she thought, as she cautiously made her way from the door-yard toward the rough lane that led to the sandy road, and behind a sheltering bush she sat down resolved to linger but a moment before beginning her homeward journey.

Not far from where she sat were masses of wild roses, now in full bloom, and their fragrance mingled with the salt tang of the sea air seemed to Priscilla the most beautiful fragrance possible. She breathed it in deeply as she stretched out on the warm sand, wishing that Judy Coleman might have been with her and shared all the ad-

ventures of the evening. "I wish Judy could have seen Mistress Coffin curtsey," thought Prissie, smiling as she recalled the sudden quiet of the Nantucket men as the door opened before them. "I guess I'll have something to tell Edward. I guess he'll be surprised when he knows that I saw it all. Probably he didn't see anything at all, except the smugglers landing on the beach," and, well pleased with her own part in all that had happened, Prissie gave a little chuckle of delight in the thought that Edward, even if he was a boy, had not even seen Mistress Coffin welcome the Nantucket men.

Resting in the soft fragrant air of the June night, tired out by her long walk and the excitement of all that she had seen, her eyes closed and she drifted into slumber, and it was hours later when she was awakened by someone calling: "Priscilla Fowler! Priscilla Fowler! Wake up! Wake up!" and opened her eyes to find Edward Coleman standing near her and to see that the pale glow of early morning was spreading over the sky.

CHAPTER XVI

A DAY IN BED

EDWARD did not wait for Priscilla to speak before he began to tell of the adventures of the night, and Prissie, plodding beside him over the sandy cart track that led to Sherburne, quickly discovered that Edward had not only seen all the events of which she had meant to tell him, but that he had been hiding near the trap-door down which the smugglers had vanished with their booty, and had instantly recognized Priscilla's voice when she had called to the Nantucket men and led them toward Mistress Coleman's house.

"And I was close behind thee, Prissie, when thou hid near the house, and I saw thee when thou sped across the kitchen and opened the panel," he declared, using the Quaker "thee" and "thou" which he generally avoided.

"Did we catch the smugglers?" Prissie questioned eagerly, but Edward shook his head mournfully.

"Not a sign of them. They were off like a

flock of gulls, and their bales and boxes are in the passage, since Mr. Folger said to let them rest. But they need not think themselves too smart for Nantucket men; we'll have them yet," he replied, and added quickly:

"Can you not step out a bit faster, Prissie? I have to climb the shed roof to get in my room, and my mother is always stirring by sun-up," and he pointed a warning finger to the eastern sky where a glow of light showed that sunrise was close at hand.

"Then hurry; I can walk no faster," declared Prissie, who felt not only tired but disappointed by what Edward had told her.

"I wish I had stayed at home," she declared, stopping and regarding her companion as if he were to blame for all the mistakes of the adventure, while Edward, in his turn, stared at her in amazement as he exclaimed:

"Why, Priscilla Fowler! If thou hadst not come the Nantucket men would indeed have made a muddle of it. 'Twas thou who started them for the house; and when thou ran across the kitchen and opened the panel I did hear Mr. Folger say: 'Bless the little maid, we are not defeated yet.'"

Priscilla drew a long breath, and a little smile crept over her face as Edward continued: "And thou need not fear that they will speak of the matter to thy father. Mr. Folger bade them be silent of all that has happened this night."

Priscilla was now easily keeping pace with Edward, who had taken no notice of her suggestion that he should leave her and hurry on, and it was not until she had bade him good-bye and was nearly at her own home that she wondered how he had discovered her resting place on the moors. It was months later before she knew that Edward, after his first sight of her in the shadows of the hillside, had not been far from her during the entire night, and that while she slept he had crouched, wakeful and watchful, not far away. "She's but a little maid, and I must be sure no harm befalls her," the boy, who was only eleven, had told himself soberly; and, by his sense of chivalry, he had risked the chance of a severe punishment should his mother discover his absence from home.

When Prissie went up the path to her home she, for the first time, began to wonder how she could reach her chamber without discovery. A faint line of smoke rose from the chimney, show-

ing that her mother and father were up, and as she neared the open door she heard her mother say:

"There seems to be no end to Nantucket's trouble this year. What think you of all these rumors that the town may be plundered and burned by an English squadron from New York?"

Priscilla did not wait to hear her father's reply; she sped to the front door, that her mother always opened in the early hours of the summer morning, ran lightly up the stairs, and, slipping off her clothes, dropped into bed and was almost instantly asleep; nor did she awaken an hour later when her mother called her name from the little hallway, nor even when Mrs. Fowler stood in the doorway of the chamber and looked in to find her little daughter so fast asleep that, as she afterward declared, she had not the heart to awaken her. And when Prissie's father came up from the wharves for his midday meal his wife met him with an anxious face.

"'Tis Prissie!" she explained in a whisper. "She is still asleep, and I fear sickening for a fever; for, an hour since, I thought best to waken her and she called out in her sleep: 'The passage-

way! Quick! The passageway!' I know not what to make of it!"

Captain Fowler's face grew serious, and he tiptoed up the stairs to look at his little daughter, but came down with a reassuring smile.

"The little maid is tired out. Too much racing over the moors, maybe. Let her sleep it out, and when she wakes you'll find no signs of fever," he said.

"I'll steep a good dish of spearmint for the child, just the same," declared Mrs. Fowler, "and give her a hot bath before bedtime. I liked not the way she called out."

"There's no distemper about the town, is there?" questioned Captain Fowler. "The Coleman boy, who is about Prissie's age, was on Long Wharf this morning curled up against a hogshead fast asleep. With some lads I'd not give it a thought, but the Coleman boy is not a lazy lad, nor one to sleep of a morning."

Mrs. Fowler shook her head. "Who can say? It may be 'tis some illness now that will strike at the children. I must look after Prissie more sharply. She runs about too freely," said Mrs. Fowler, resolving that henceforth Prissie should not wander out of her sight.

But when, in mid-afternoon, Prissie awakened and declared herself hungry, and was eager to be up and dressed, Mrs. Fowler was less fearful. Nevertheless she insisted that the little girl should drink a mugful of hot spearmint tea, bathe in hot water, and return to bed.

"But I'm too hot now, Mother," Priscilla vainly objected. "'Tis July, and hardly a breath of air stirring, and I'm hungry. Am I not to have my breakfast?"

"It is near supper-time, and you shall have porridge and warm milk after you have drunk the tea," Mrs. Fowler said, and Priscilla knew there was no more to be said. The fact that she had slept all day made her a little anxious; she wondered if Edward's absence from home had been discovered; and, warm and uncomfortable under the blankets that her mother heaped over her, Priscilla took little comfort in remembering that Mr. Timothy Folger had praised her courage.

"Debby Swain came in twice to-day to see you," said Mrs. Fowler as she brought Priscilla the longed-for porridge and milk. "She brought you a full box of guava jelly on the last visit."

"Goody! And may I not taste it? But why

did she bring it, Mother? And was it not kind of Mistress Swain!" exclaimed Priscilla, sitting up in bed with such suddenness that one blanket went rolling to the floor, and another was displaced from her shoulders.

"Mercy, child! Do not jump about so! Debby brought the jelly thinking you were ill. If you are up to-morrow we'll see about your having a taste of it," said her mother, carefully replacing the blankets.

"The Coleman boy, Edward, came to the door to ask for you not an hour since," continued Mrs. Fowler; "someone had told him you were ill."

"Oh, Mother, I am not ill! I was but tired! I'd like to be up now," moaned Priscilla, restless and uncomfortable under the hot blankets.

Mrs. Fowler shook her head gravely.

"To be tired for no good reason is to be ill, Priscilla. If you had been walking for hours you would not have been more worn out; but we will hope you can sit up an hour to-morrow," and Mrs. Fowler smiled encouragingly.

"I'm not sleepy, Mother. Will you not say me a verse before you go down-stairs? Say me the verse about 'Valiant Heroes'!" pleaded the little girl.

"Well, I'll say what I can recall of it; 'tis your father who knows it best.

"'When Drake and Cavendish sailed the world about,
And valiant heroes found new countries out,
To Britain's glory and their lasting fame,—
Were we like-minded we might do the same!'"

repeated Mrs. Fowler, adding quickly: "'Like minded' or not 'twill be found Americans will hold their own, and defend their rights when need be. Now I'll say a verse that my mother taught me and then you must go to sleep:

"'Oh! that mine eyes might closèd be,
To what becomes me not to see;
That deafness might possess mine ear
To what becomes me not to hear;
That truth my tongue might always tye
From ever speaking foolishly,'"

and, with the last word of the old verse, Mrs. Fowler bade Prissie good-night, and it was not long before the little girl was again fast asleep.

But she was wide awake at an early hour the next morning, and up and dressed before her mother and father. As she came down the stairs, however, her father called to her and bade

her not to go out, so Prissie resolved to " blow up " the fire and begin to prepare breakfast.

" Blowing up " the fire meant that the ashes over a bed of smouldering coals must be carefully raked away, light wood put over the coals, and then with the bellows the coals blown into a blaze, and the little girl was busy at this when her mother came hurrying into the kitchen, and quickly drew her away from the deep fireplace.

" My dear child! Up and dressed! Well, though I see naught wrong with you this morning 'tis best that you keep indoors. Lie down on the settle, Prissie, and talk not of going out today," said Mrs. Fowler firmly, as she drew Prissie toward the wide settle on the far side of the pleasant kitchen.

But Prissie showed so good an appetite for her breakfast, and seemed so nearly in her usual health, that her mother decided she might make an afternoon visit to Debby Swain, and thankful to be once more out-of-doors, Prissie started happily forth toward her friend's house at an early hour in the afternoon. She was but half-way there when she heard someone calling her name and turned to see Edward Coleman hurrying after her.

CHAPTER XVII

NOAPOGS

"WHAT dost thou think, Prissie? 'Tis common talk on the wharves that a fleet of British vessels may come upon us at any time," Edward declared, as he caught up with the surprised Prissie. Before she could make any response, however, he was eagerly questioning her.

"Wert thou really ill yesterday or perishing for sleep?" he asked in a less serious tone. "I could hardly keep awake. Twice I fell into sleep on the wharf, and again at home, and my mother gave me a bowl of thoroughwort tea, and sent me to bed at sunset;" and Edward shook his head with so comical a gesture of disgust that Priscilla laughed as she, in her turn, told of her day in bed.

"But my mother does not even guess that I had journeyed to Quaise and back," she concluded.

At the mention of Quaise Edward's face again grew serious.

"I fear 'tis not a secret we can keep much longer," he declared; "and 'tis for that reason I ran after thee. Prissie, thou hadst best tell thy mother about it; already 'tis being whispered about the wharves of a little maid who told Mr. Folger of a secret passage at Quaise; and, while some whisper other names, the truth will soon be broadcast about the town. Thy mother and father will be ill pleased if thou dost not tell them about it, and that 'twas not mischief that sent thee but a wish to help thy neighbors."

"You talk as if you were Mr. Folger himself, Edward!" declared Priscilla, "and you forget the vow I took on Long Wharf. I *can't* tell!" and Prissie's face was now as grave as even Edward could wish.

"'Twas a foolish vow," the boy said soberly, "nor should they have asked it of a little maid. Those very men are chattering of their night at Quaise—of all they did, and of Mistress Coffin's cleverness. Thou must see Timothy Folger and say that thou must tell thy mother," and before Prissie could answer this Edward turned and ran down the slope toward the town.

For a moment Prissie stood looking after him, so intent on what he had told her that she did

not hear Debby's voice until the little girl was close enough to clasp both hands about Prissie's arm as she exclaimed:

"Oh, Prissie! You are well again!" and laughed aloud at Prissie's sudden jump and exclamation. "I was just starting for your house, Prissie. 'Tis so warm and fine a morning that my grandma said I might go to the beach below Sea Cliff for an hour, and you can go, too, can you not, Prissie? We'll find shells this morning after the high tide," pleaded Debby; and Prissie agreed promptly, forgetting for the moment that her mother had told her she was not to go far from home without asking permission. The two little girls started down the lane that would bring them to the quiet beach of the outer harbor where the tides crept softly in.

For a little while the two girls walked along the smooth beach, now and then stopping to pick up a few of the tiny delicate shells that every tide left on the clean sand. It was Prissie who suggested that they should take off their shoes and stockings and wade along the edge of the creeping tide, and in a few moments both the girls were shouting eagerly as they danced along, now to meet an incoming sweep of foam-flecked

creeping water, and now to run well up the beach on the sun-warmed sand.

"This is more fun than the shearing!" declared Debby, her blue eyes shining happily as she smiled at Prissie's leap to escape a wave higher than they had yet met. "But look! Look, Prissie!" and Debby's smile vanished as she pointed toward Eel Point. "What are those Indians doing?"

Prissie looked, half fearful that it might be Nickanoose himself, but laughed gaily as she discovered that the Indians were only a number of Indian girls no older than herself. "Just girls, Debby!" she said. "But there's a camp further along; maybe they are from Martha's Vineyard."

"Had we best go home, Prissie?" questioned Debby a little fearfully, for while the Nantucket children had no fear of their own Indians they knew that those who sometimes landed on their shores were not always to be trusted, and Debby and Prissie had both been cautioned to keep away from unknown visitors.

But Prissie smiled as she answered Debby's question: "They are only girls, like ourselves, Debby, and why should we go home because of

them? See! Here they come!" and Debby seized Prissie's hand and stood close beside her as a number of Indian girls, laughing and making strange calls, came racing toward them. As they came near Prissie realized that none of the Indian girls were as young as Debby, and that nearly all of them were older than herself. Two of the taller of the group carried bow and arrows, and as these two came close to the little white girls they stopped suddenly, set a feather-headed arrow in place, and drew their bows as if to fire at Debby and Prissie.

"Don't cry, Debby," Prissie whispered quickly. "This is just one of their games. If we act afraid they'll laugh and hoot at us, and maybe be ugly," and, with a little gulp of terror, Debby choked back her cry of fear, and holding tight to Prissie's hand faced the dancing, menacing Indian girls, who were evidently determined to make sport of the two white-faced children.

If the dark-faced strangers had expected the white girls to run they must surely have been surprised when Prissie, firmly drawing Debby along beside her, advanced to meet them, and with a smile and a questioning note in her voice, uttered:

"Noapogs?"

The loud calls of the Indian girls ceased instantly; their triumphant smiles vanished, and they looked first at each other and then at Prissie as if expecting she would tell them what to do; but Prissie again repeated the word, "Noapogs?" at the same time pointing out across the blue waters that lay between Nantucket and the island of Martha's Vineyard, and at this the girls with the bows and arrows nodded, and began to chatter eagerly, pointing back to the wigwam on the beach and then toward the harbor.

Priscilla shook her head smilingly, and, after some talk among the Indian girls, the taller of the group muttered a few words of English, saying that they were Noapogs, as the Indians of Martha's Vineyard were called, and that her name was Sasapana. "You name what?" she demanded, and the Indian girls all did their best to say "Priscilla," "Deborah," with many queer noises and exclamations. Sasapana, pointing to another girl, said, "Askamopo!" and Prissie and Debby gravely repeated the name after her, and now Sasapana made the white girls understand that the squaws of the Noapogs had come to Nantucket to gather orange grass, which they

wove into baskets, and to visit with their friends among the Nantucket Indians, while the girls had been left to play on the shore and amuse themselves as they pleased.

Debby's face brightened as she listened, and when Sasapana, pointing toward the smouldering camp-fire, told them that wild duck were being roasted there, and asked the white girls to join in the feast they were preparing, both Debby and Prissie promptly agreed, and, surrounded by the now friendly Indian girls, ran down the shore, all chattering and calling out to each other as if they could understand the strange and unknown words.

"'Tis fun, Prissie! Oh, I'm glad I did not cry out," Debby exclaimed, as one of the smaller girls drew Debby down beside her on the warm sand, and taking from her neck a string of fairy-like shells carefully dropped it over Debby's head.

"Oh! I wish I had something for her!" Debby exclaimed; and when the little Indian girl seized her hand and pointed to the little ring of carved silver that Debby's uncle had given her Debby did not hesitate a moment, but drew it off and put it on the slender finger of her new

friend. When the well-roasted ducks were taken from under the hot sand the Indian girls gave their guests the choicest bits, and, from tightly woven baskets, offered them squares of crisp wheat cakes, that Prissie and Debby thought were the sweetest bread they had ever tasted.

"Now Sasapana tell story," announced the tall girl, and she began the tale of the Indian giant, Maushope, who could wade from Martha's Vineyard to the mainland without wetting his knees, and whose food was, chiefly, broiled whales, and who tore up huge trees by their roots like weeds.

In the midst of this story one of the Indian girls gave a sudden exclamation and a sharp call of warning, and instantly they were all on their feet and sped off—"like a flock of gulls," Debby declared, and the two white girls heard a familiar voice calling their names.

"'Tis Grandpa Swain!" exclaimed Debby. "Oh, I wish they had not run away!"

"Well, and are you having a pow-wow with the Noapogs?" asked the captain, as he came up to the little girls, and listened smilingly as they told him of their new friends, and of all that had happened since they left home that morning.

"'Tis well they asked you to share their food, for now 'tis mid-afternoon, and your mother, Priscilla, is sadly anxious about you," he said, as they turned toward home.

"Do you suppose we will ever see those girls again?" asked Debby, in so grave a tone that her grandfather looked down at her questioningly, and Prissie said quickly:

"We surely will, Debby. When the British go home, and 'tis safe for our boats to leave harbor, we will go to Martha's Vineyard and visit them."

"Why, to be sure," Captain Swain declared heartily, and Prissie and Debby smiled happily at each other, and henceforth made many a plan for the visit they would some day make to the Indian girls of Martha's Vineyard. When they came in sight of the tall poplar trees at the gate of Prissie's home she bade Debby and Captain Swain good-bye and ran up the path eager to tell her mother of her new friends.

CHAPTER XVIII

EAST WINDS

Prissie had not forgotten Edward Coleman's warning in regard to telling her mother and father of the Quaise adventure; even during the exciting meeting with the Indian girls, and in the days that followed, it was never far from her thoughts.

" I'll have to tell them of that day Nickanoose set the signals, and of the English sailor cutting them down, before I tell about Quaise; and I can't tell about Quaise unless Mr. Timothy Folger says that I may," she decided, and more than once Priscilla set forth from her home in search of Mr. Folger in order to ask a release from the promise that she had given. But it was no easy matter to find Mr. Folger during the early weeks of July, 1779. The townspeople were all alarmed by the rumors of an attack on Sherburne by a British squadron, and Mr. Folger, with other prominent citizens, made a journey to Martha's Vineyard to ask assurance of safety from Edward Winslow, lieutenant-colonel, who com-

manded a party of British troops stationed there, and George Leonard, commander of a fleet of armed vessels in the service of His Majesty, George the Third. These officers promised the Nantucket men that no attack should be made upon the island, and this news for a time quieted the fears of the townspeople.

Several packets arrived from Boston, and one of these brought Prissie a long letter from Judy Coleman, with most of the words correctly spelled. But, although Prissie read it eagerly, wondering if she herself could ever endure such a thing as to become a pupil in Mistress Gardner's school in Boston, she was disappointed in what Judy wrote.

" 'Tis all of her walks on Boston Common with other girls, and of her lessons on the harp, and of Mr. Hancock's fine house on Beacon Street, and that Mr. Samuel Adams has made a visit to the school. Judy says naught of Nantucket," thought Priscilla, but as she turned to the last page her face brightened, for here Judy had written: "Do not forget, Prissie, what you promised about signals." And reading this, Priscilla realized that she must continue to be silent in regard to all that had befallen her.

"Mother and Father would surely bid me to keep closely at home and have naught to do with signals," she told herself, knowing that her father would say that warfare should not come near a little maid. "But who knows but that I might see things that older folk would not notice," she thought. And this indeed was to prove the case, for within a few weeks it was Priscilla's signals that saved her father's boat from being captured by the armed vessels of a British squadron.

Although Priscilla went often to the main street of the town on errands for her mother, and now and then to the wharves, she saw nothing of Edward Coleman for several weeks. This was explained when her father said that Edward had accompanied Mr. Timothy Folger on a cruise to the mainland.

"They put into port last night, and none too soon," declared Captain Fowler. "A British fleet has reached the Vineyard, and means, no doubt, to plunder and destroy our settlement; but if the wind will only hold east they may give up their unfair plan against a helpless community."

Prissie listened eagerly, and wondered if Mistress Coffin would lend any aid to this threatening fleet. "I'll watch for signals now, and Ed-

ward Coleman must help me," she resolved. And, as the little girl realized that Captain Swain and all the older people were alarmed on account of the danger that was so near at hand, she became more and more alert and watchful and was almost a daily visitor at Captain Swain's, where from the "Walk" on the housetop she and Debby peered through the telescope, searching the waters toward Martha's Vineyard for the sight of the threatening fleet.

"'Tis good fortune the wind holds east," was heard on every hand, as nothing else now appeared possible to prevent the coming of the dreaded enemy.

Many people were carting their valuables to some distance from the settlement and burying them. A constant lookout was kept at various points commanding the approach to the harbor, and for once the east wind was welcome, for as long as it held the enemy ships could not enter the harbor.

Edward Coleman, coming to the Fowlers' on an errand for his mother, had much to tell of his cruise to the mainland, and the visit to the Vineyard; and Priscilla listened eagerly, wishing that she, too, could take such a journey.

"And so thee will, Prissie, when the time comes for thee to go to Boston to school," Edward assured her; "and that may be soon now, for the English have left Philadelphia, and were defeated in New Jersey. Mr. Folger says they will soon be driven from America, and then thou will be going to Boston to school!"

"I will not!" declared Priscilla firmly. "There will be schools here then, and I have no wish to go to Boston. 'Tis a whaling voyage I'd like to take."

"Thou had best not talk that way, Priscilla," Edward answered, shaking his head solemnly. "If thou wish to be a second Mistress Coffin ——" but Priscilla's sudden grasp of his arm made Edward stop suddenly.

"Look, Edward. What sails are those?"

The two children were at the Fowlers' gate looking off toward the harbor, and Priscilla had been quick to notice a strange craft beating back and forth in an endeavor to enter the port, and, as she seized Edward by the arm, another armed sloop sailed close to the first.

"'Tis the enemy," declared Edward, darting off toward the town.

For a moment Priscilla stood watching the

menacing vessels, and then, with a little exclamation of terror, she too ran swiftly down the slope, turning toward the bluffs as she reached the end of the lane.

"I must let Father know before he leaves harbor. I must! I must!" she told herself as she hurried on; for the sight of the vessels of the enemy had reminded Priscilla that, at that very moment, her father was on board his sloop, *The Wild Goose,* preparing for a fishing cruise.

"He will sail right near those vessels, and they'll capture him," thought Priscilla, and as she reached the bluffs she could see *The Wild Goose,* with mainsail and jib set to catch the favoring wind. From the inner harbor her father had not seen the ships of the enemy, the armed schooner *Royal Charlotte,* and the sloop *General Carlton,* and *The Wild Goose* was now headed straight toward danger. Not until Captain Fowler's alert glance discovered a little figure on the brow of the cliff waving and signaling, first toward his sloop and then toward the outer harbor, did he discover his danger and change his course, creeping back to the safety of the wharves.

As Priscilla realized that her father had understood her signals the boom of a gun rang out

across the harbor, but the *Royal Charlotte* was too far away for the shot to do harm, and with the east wind for their friend the Nantucket people were safe.

Priscilla met her father on his way home, and when he called out: "Well, Commodore! This day's work makes you an admiral of the American Navy," she laughed delightedly; and as, hand in hand, they walked toward home Captain Fowler praised her for her quick thought and clever signaling; and Priscilla resolved to tell him of that May day when she had discovered the Indian's signals, and of Lieutenant Geoffrey Burke of the British sloop *Magic*.

Captain Fowler listened in amazement to Priscilla's story of the day that she and Judy Coleman had visited Quaise, and of the night of adventure when Priscilla had pointed out the concealed passageway that led to Mistress Coffin's house.

"Your mother must hear all this," he declared. "I can scarce credit that my little maid has shown so great a courage, and done so great a service for us all. Your mother will be proud indeed."

But Priscilla was none too sure of this; she

was a little fearful as her mother listened to the story of all the perils that her little daughter had so unconsciously faced. But Mrs. Fowler's first remark made Priscilla smile with satisfaction.

"'Tis what I should expect a little maid of Nantucket to do," she said. "I see no reason to be greatly surprised at Priscilla's courage. And the Coleman children, too; Judy is a clever girl, and Edward a fine lad. But we must have a talk with Mr. Folger, that he may know that Priscilla has told us of the visit to Quaise."

"Oh, that is common knowledge," declared Captain Fowler smilingly; "but I heard nothing said of a small maid being concerned in it!"

Although Priscilla's mother and father did not speak of what their little daughter had told them, the fact that it was Priscilla's quick thought and action in signaling her father that had saved him from capture was soon known along the wharves and among their friends and neighbors, and Captain Swain declared that what she had done ought to be written down in the Town Records. Nor could any of those friendly people imagine that the signaling of a little maid of Nantucket was to bring a serious threat and menace upon the town.

CHAPTER XIX

PRISCILLA AT TOWN HALL

"I HAVE told my father and mother, Mr. Folger," Prissie exclaimed breathlessly, as she caught up with Mr. Timothy Folger after running along Main Street after him. "I did not mean to break my promise, but Edward Coleman said 'twas no longer a secret," and Priscilla's blue eyes, troubled and a little fearful, gazed up at the grave face regarding her so seriously.

"And hast thou kept quiet about the Quaise excursion all this time, Priscilla?" he responded, a smile creeping over his face. "Why, thou hast done better than thy elders, for each man of them has told the story. 'Twas a foolish promise to ask of a small maid, and 'tis right and proper that thy father and mother should know that thou were brave and fearless in helping when help was needed," and with a friendly nod Mr. Folger bade Priscilla good-bye, and turned toward the Town Hall where a meeting of citizens

was to be held regarding a serious affair that threatened the safety of Nantucket.

It was now a week since Priscilla's signals had saved *The Wild Goose* from capture, and a letter had been received from Captain Edward Winslow making charges against Nantucket people. This letter, that was to be read publicly on this very morning at the Town Hall, stated that someone had "signaled and wafted a sloop, and so prevented her capture by a British armed vessel," and that this was assisting the enemies of King George, and that henceforth Nantucket would be treated as an enemy of England. It was to read this letter to his fellow-citizens that Mr. Folger was bound for the Town Hall on the morning when overtaken by Priscilla, and he had but bidden her good-bye when Edward Coleman came running down the street and, with a brief greeting to Priscilla, would have hurried on had the little girl not called after him:

"Edward! Wait a minute. I have written a letter to Judy. Can you send it for me?"

"Maybe, but I must not stop now, Prissie! There are to be great doings at the Town Hall this morning," he called back, hardly stopping a

second, as he glanced back and noticed Priscilla's look of surprise.

For a moment Priscilla stood looking after him, a little puzzled and offended that Edward should be in too much of a hurry to even tell when a letter to Judy could be forwarded.

"Since Edward cruised off to the mainland he thinks he has grown up; 'great doings at the Town Hall,' he said, and was off as if he were the Town Clerk," she whispered to herself. "I presume to say I could go to the Town Hall myself if I wanted to." At this thought Priscilla quickened her pace, with the sudden resolve that she, too, would hear of the great events of which Edward spoke.

But as she neared the entrance to the building Priscilla remembered that not even Mistress Coffin, or any woman of Sherburne, ever entered the Town Hall when public meetings were held.

"They would bid me run home should I so much as go near the door," thought Priscilla; "but maybe, if I stand close under a window, I can hear all that is said," and, with a quick glance down the quiet street to make sure that she was not noticed, Prissie darted up the path to the

building and ran toward the farther end, where two narrow windows opened toward the wharves.

A pile of barrels and hogsheads stood against the rear of the building, and Prissie instantly realized that if she could reach the top of these without being discovered she could not only hear all that was said but would be able to see all that might take place.

"'Twill be no more difficult than it was to climb the 'lookout,'" she told herself. "'Twill make Edward Coleman stare when I tell him I heard and saw all the 'great doings,'" and Prissie smiled delightedly at the thought that here was another adventure of which she could write to Judy.

It was an easy matter for the little girl to reach the top of the first solid hogshead that rested so firmly on the ground, but to get to the top of the barrels piled on the hogsheads proved a more dangerous undertaking. Priscilla knew that any unusual noise would bring a dozen men to the open windows, and that she must therefore work as quietly as possible; and, also, there was no small danger if she should fall and send the barrels crashing down after her.

From the top of the hogsheads she heard the

murmur of familiar voices; the meeting was being called to order. "I must hurry or I'll not see anything," she thought, and, clutching at the top of a barrel that seemed to stand more securely than its neighbors, Priscilla was successful in drawing herself to its top that came nearly level, although a little to one side, of one of the windows; and perched there she could see and hear all that took place in the Town Hall.

"There's Captain Starbuck, and Cap'n Macy, and Cap'n Gardner, and Cap'n Swain," Priscilla whispered to herself, as she named over the familiar citizens of the town, and smiled as she saw her father, thinking of how surprised he would be to even imagine that his little daughter was so near.

But Priscilla's delight in being within sight and hearing of the "great doings," of which Edward Coleman had spoken, was very brief: Mr. Timothy Folger was standing on the platform that faced the window near which Prissie was perched, and he was speaking, reminding his audience that they were in constant danger from British ships.

"We are now accused," he continued, "of aiding the king's enemies and so increasing our

"This Day's Work Makes You an Admiral"

peril, since we are without means to defend ourselves. Edward Winslow and George Leonard, in the service of King George at Martha's Vineyard, have sent us the following letter:

"'*To the inhabitants of the island of Nantucket:*

"'Whereas we have this day received information, by John Boswell, officer of marines on board the armed schooner *Royal Charlotte,* that a certain sloop, in the service of His Majesty's enemies, would have been captured had not the inhabitants of Nantucket, by wafts and signals, warned said sloop and so prevented its capture.'"

Priscilla held her breath as she listened, for the letter went on to say that this "signaling" was an aid to the Americans, and a good cause for the British to attack Nantucket, and the letter concluded:

"'We hereby proclaim and declare to you, the inhabitants of Nantucket, that, unless an explanation of these signals is made to us, promptly and sufficiently, we shall commence operations against you.'"

This letter filled all who listened with alarm, and for some moments there was no sound to be

heard in the quiet room; then apparently from the top of the building a clear voice sounded, and the startled audience turned and gazed toward the open window to see a small girl perched on the window-sill—a small girl wearing a dress of faded blue linen, her yellow hair framing her pale face, and her blue eyes shining with resolve, as she called out:

"It wasn't 'inhabitants of Nantucket,' 'twas *me*. I signaled my father's sloop. And," Priscilla's clear voice rang out firmly as she said, "I'm glad I did," and she courageously faced the crowd of sturdy seamen, who were now gazing up at her in wondering amazement.

A little murmur swept through the room, a murmur that swelled into a hearty cheer as Captain Fowler reached the window and lifted his little daughter from her dangerous perch.

But Priscilla did not yet realize that the cheer was for her. She clung tightly to her father's hand as he led her through the room, and at the doorway he patted her shoulder, saying:

"Run home, Prissie. 'Tis all right. Be not afraid. Thou art a brave little maid, but I know not how thou reached that window."

"I climbed up the barrels, Father!" Prissie

soberly declared. "What will King George do with me for signaling your boat?" she asked anxiously, and at her father's ready smile her fears vanished.

"While the east wind holds the enemies of Nantucket cannot harm one of us," he said, "and even Captain Edward Winslow will not wish harm to a small maid who signaled her father's boat. Now run home, and let me find you there when I come," and Captain Fowler turned back to the hall.

Priscilla walked soberly up the main street, curtseying to Mistress Swain who passed her smilingly, and not forgetting to speak to two Indian women who were on their way to the shore, and who grunted a response to her greeting.

"I'll not tell Mother until Father comes home," Priscilla resolved, as she opened the gate and went up the path that led to the door. For, although she no longer felt afraid that she might be taken a prisoner by the British, she was wondering, a little doubtfully, what her mother would say when she heard that Priscilla had attended a Town Meeting by climbing through a window.

CHAPTER XX

"PLEASANT WORDS"

As Priscilla ran up the path she could hear her mother singing, and stopped for a moment to listen:

"'Thou didst, O Lord, create the mighty whale,
That wondrous monster of a mighty length,
Vast is his head and body, vast his tail,
Beyond conception his unmeasured strength.'"

"'Tis Mr. Peleg Folger's hymn," thought the little girl, and listened for the next verse:

"'Monsters that in the briny ocean dwell,
And winged troops that every way disperse,
They all thy wonders speak, thy praises tell,
O thou great Ruler of the universe.'"

"Mother! Sing the rest of it," called Priscilla, as she ran into the kitchen, for Mr. Folger's verses dealt with sailormen and whales, and adventures on the high seas, and were well liked and admired by the boys and girls of Nantucket, as well as by their elders; but, at Priscilla's sug-

gestion to sing the remaining twenty-one verses of this hymn, Mrs. Fowler smilingly shook her head.

" 'Twould take until dinner-time. Didst thou hear, by any chance, Prissie, of what is going on at Town Hall?"

At this question the little girl's face became so serious and troubled that her mother was about to speak again when, in a low voice, Prissie said:

" 'Tis a meeting about a letter from Cap'n Winslow; he says the king's ships will attack Nantucket because I signaled to Father's boat!" and choking back the sobs, Priscilla waited to hear what her mother had to say to this dangerous news. But the sound of footsteps running up the path made both Prissie and her mother turn toward the doorway where Edward Coleman, flushed and panting from his headlong rush up the lane, stood, cap in hand.

" If thou please, Mistress Fowler, Mr. Folger and Cap'n Swain and 'most all the Town Meeting are on their way here. 'Tis about Priscilla and her signaling," he added in explanation, as Mrs. Fowler exclaimed: " Whatever brings them here?"

" Oh, Mother! Do they mean to send me away

a prisoner?" exclaimed the frightened girl. "Maybe they will, to save the island!" and Prissie clung to her mother's arm as if sure that her mother would defend her from such a danger.

"What nonsense, Priscilla! Dost thou think Nantucket men would do such a thing! I am ashamed to hear thee!" declared Mrs. Fowler.

"Why! The Town Meeting think her a brave little maid!" exclaimed Edward. "More than one spoke well of thy courage, Priscilla. Let them not see thee crying!" said Edward warningly. For, fast as Edward had come with his startling news, the sound of approaching steps and the murmur of voices could now be heard from the lane, and Priscilla had barely time to wipe her eyes and smooth back her hair, and Mrs. Fowler to step toward the door to welcome her guests, when Prissie heard her father's voice saying:

"Maybe Mr. Peleg Folger will tell the little maid; he has so pleasant a use of words that she is sure to be mightily pleased whatever he may say."

At this there was an approving murmur, and, closely followed by several of the men whom Prissie had seen at the Town Hall, Mr. Peleg

Folger stepped into the wide pleasant kitchen, greeted Mrs. Fowler, and, waiting until his companions had been welcomed, turning smilingly toward Priscilla, who now stood close beside her father, he said:

"A word in time, Priscilla, saves much trouble; and by telling us, an hour since, that thou signaled and wafted to thy father's boat, thou hast provided us with all the excuse we need. The King of England himself would not find a word to say against a small maid seeking to save her father from danger."

Priscilla's face brightened as she listened to Mr. Peleg Folger's "pleasant words," and realized that he was praising her, not only for the signaling that had saved *The Wild Goose* from capture, but for the part she had taken in the excursion to Quaise and for destroying, with the help of Lieutenant Burke, the signals that Nickanoose had set on the "lookout."

Mrs. Fowler listened in amazement to the story of Priscilla's unexpected appearance in the window of the Town Hall.

"It does seem as if Prissie had really helped to protect us all," she said, and there was an instant chorus of approval from the grave-faced

captains who had come to commend the courage and loyalty of a little maid of Nantucket.

Then Mr. Folger read the letter that the Town Clerk had written in response to the charges made by the British officers, explaining that the " wafts and signals " had not been made by " any grown person, but by a small maid," and, since Nantucket could not be defended against the British, they asked to be left unassailed.

Before the little group departed it was decided that Captain Swain and Captain Fowler should accompany Timothy Folger to deliver the message to Captain Winslow at Martha's Vineyard, and Edward Coleman was given permission to go with them.

Priscilla was sure that this was the proudest day of her life, and as she stood in the doorway and bade these men, who were so ready to give honor where honor was due, even to a little maid, good-bye, her thoughts flew to Judy and she wished with all her heart that Judy might have been with her, and shared in the praise of Mr. Peleg Folger's " pleasant words."

For a number of days the east wind continued, preventing the British fleet from entering Nantucket harbor, and carrying out their

threat of plundering and destroying the town, and when a fishing-boat made port with the news that the enemy's vessels were leaving the Sound, and had evidently given up the enterprise, the people of the island began to feel that the worst of the dangers that had so long threatened them were past. And more than one citizen declared that their deliverance was wrought "by Him who sets bounds to the wicked."

Although there were hardships yet to be borne before the American Army drove the invaders from her shores, the people of Nantucket, after the autumn of 1779, were not again threatened by attack from British ships. The fishermen gradually resumed their work in comparative security, and Priscilla no longer wandered from bluffs to shore with a watchful eye for the sloops of war that had so long menaced the safety of Nantucket.

Judy Coleman did not hear of Priscilla's adventure at the Town Hall until her return to her island home in the early summer of 1780. And this time she was not a passenger in one of Mistress Coffin's vessels, for that bold and capable woman no longer carried on her dangerous activities. Judy came sailing into harbor in

one of the packets that now made regular trips between the island and the mainland.

From the "Walk" on the roof of Captain Swain's house Priscilla and Debby eagerly watched the schooner *Dolphin* as she rounded Brant Point, and then hurried off to the wharf that they might be in good time to welcome Judy.

"'Tis a year since we watched her sail away, Prissie. Do you remember?" said Debby, as, hand in hand, the two little girls went down the main street of Sherburne.

Priscilla nodded smilingly. "I do indeed, Debby. Strawberries were ripening, and 'twas the pleasantest time of the year, just as it is now."

"And Judy can go with us to the Vineyard when Grandpa takes us for our visit to the Noapogs," continued Debby, with a little skip, as if she must let everyone know how many happy things June brought to those fortunate enough to live on the island of Nantucket.

But, happy as she was in the thought of Judy's return, Priscilla wondered, a little anxiously, if it would really be the same Judy who had so suddenly vanished after that visit to Quaise, when they had discovered the smugglers' underground passage to Mistress Coffin's house. For

all the words in Judy's recent letters were now correctly spelled, and Judy had seen many wonderful things. In her last letter she had told of the arrival in Boston harbor of the French frigate *Hermione,* with Lafayette on board. Judy had written of the salutes fired from Castle Island and Fort Hill, as the frigate came into port, flying the French flag, and she had described Lafayette's landing at Hancock's wharf, and the procession, the peals of bells, as the young Frenchman was conducted to the house of John Hancock, on May 28th, 1780; and, it seemed to Priscilla, that Judy would henceforth be more like the little girls of Boston, who were accustomed to great events, than like the old Judy who so hated all Tories and had played happily on the shore with Priscilla.

The fair wind brought the *Dolphin* swiftly to her moorings. Prissie heard the rattle of chains as the anchor shot overboard, and the big mainsail was quickly lowered. She watched a little figure, with a blue cape flying back from a dress of lighter blue, take its seat in the boat that so swiftly headed toward Long Wharf, and whispered, "Judy! Judy's home!" as if to assure herself that it was really true.

But it was Edward Coleman who was the first to welcome Judy. Priscilla watched him as he ran forward and helped Judy from the boat.

"Here's Judy! Here's Judy!" she heard him exclaim. "Priscilla! Here's Judy!" and a moment later the two little girls had clasped hands and were smiling happily at each other.

But Judy was eager to reach home, and it was some hours later when Priscilla, half-way down the lane, saw Judy running to meet her.

"Oh, Prissie! Is it not splendid that I am at home? Let us go to the 'lookout' to-morrow! Mother says that for a week I may run about as I please. And I have heard all about thee, Prissie! Edward has just told me," and, clasping Priscilla's hand, Judy's dark eyes shone with delight as she praised Priscilla's courage, and made Prissie tell her of her climb to the window of the Town Hall, and of all that followed.

"Why, Prissie! Thee defeated a British squadron! Thou surely did!" she declared, as Prissie told the story of those anxious days when Nantucket was in such danger.

But Priscilla shook her head soberly.

"'Twas the east wind, Judy," she said. "And as for the signals you should have as much credit

as I, for 'twas you bade me watch! But, Judy, let's not talk of signals nor Tories any more. The strawberries are ripe on the slope beyond our house, and I have already picked enough for a fine short-cake, and Mother says she will be well pleased if you and Edward and Debby will come to supper. You will come, will you not, Judy?"

Judy shook back her dark curls and answered smilingly:

"To be sure I will. Those are the right signals, Prissie, and I'll be in port in good season. 'Tis fine to be in Nantucket again. Boston may be the larger town but 'tis not Nantucket!"

"But you could not expect there'd be another place like Nantucket, Judy," Priscilla responded, with a little questioning note in her voice; but Judy's prompt: "Of course not!" reassured her, and the two friends started up the slope toward Captain Swain's house, talking eagerly of all that had befallen them since that far-off adventurous day at Quaise, when Judy had believed Priscilla to be a friend of the British.

Delighting in the fragrance of the salt air, that mingled with the fragrance of the blossoming wild roses, Judy and Priscilla again agreed that no place could be as pleasant as their island

home; and when, a few days after Judy's return, Debby Swain invited them to sail to Martha's Vineyard for a day's cruise, they both gladly accepted.

"Grandpa says maybe we will see the Indian girls that Prissie and I met with at Eel's Point," said Deborah; and, in response to Judy's questions, Prissie and Debby described their meeting with the Noapog girls, the duck roasted in hot ashes, and the appetizing wheat cakes, until Judy was as eager for the excursion as Debby herself.

CHAPTER XXI

A DAY'S CRUISE

THE day set for the excursion to Martha's Vineyard was a day of clear sky and favoring wind. At an early hour Priscilla was ready, wearing her best cotton dress, and with a cape of blue cloth over her arm to put on if the wind changed to the east.

"There comes Debby," said Mrs. Fowler, "and no doubt Cap'n Swain is waiting at the wharf. Be sure you remember your manners, Prissie, and do naught that is rude or unseemly."

"I'll be as polite as Mistress Mary Gardner herself," responded Prissie, as she bade her mother good-bye, and ran down the path in time to meet Debby at the gate.

Debby was carrying a round covered basket that reminded Prissie of the one, full of eggs, that the little girl had carried on the day when the Indian, Nickanoose, had cooked their dinner on the outer shore, and when Lieutenant Burke had rescued Priscilla from the "lookout." Prissie

now reminded Debby of that day on the moors, and of Judy's unexpected appearance.

"It's not eggs to-day in my basket," declared Debby, smiling with satisfaction as she remembered that this was her very own party, with her two best friends as her guests. For Mrs. Swain had sent word to Judith and Priscilla that she would provide the luncheon, and that their mothers were not to trouble with any cooking or preparations.

Both Prissie and Judy well knew that this meant a feast of dainties such as few Nantucket householders, in 1780, could furnish, and Prissie now wondered to herself what special article might be in the covered basket.

Judy was at the wharf, where Captain Swain's sloop swung with the lift of the incoming tide, and the captain and Edward Coleman, who was to be one of the party, helped the little girls on board. Captain Swain took his place at the tiller as Edward hoisted the big mainsail and jib, and as the sails caught the favoring wind the sloop sped over the blue waters of the harbor and headed toward the outer sea.

"I might put out a line for blue-fish!" suggested Edward hopefully, as he perched himself

on the cubby beside the mast, but Captain Swain shook his head.

"No bothering with fish to-day," he declared; "this is a pleasure excursion for the little maids, to welcome Judith, and to celebrate our freedom from the British cruisers that have so long made these waters a dangerous place for Nantucket craft."

"'Tis said in Boston that the British know themselves defeated, and that henceforth America will make its own laws," said Judy, her dark eyes shining with happiness as she met Priscilla's smiling glance, felt the pleasant breeze against her cheek, and realized that she was once more at home with the people she loved best.

Debby, still holding her basket, was looking eagerly toward the shores of Martha's Vineyard; her thoughts were with the Indian girls with whom she had played on the beach, and she was hoping that Sasapana and Askamopo would remember her, for her grandfather had promised that they would visit the Indian settlement of Noapogs, and Debby's covered basket contained a gift for the Indian girls.

Once out beyond Brant Point the wind freshened, and the sloop seemed to fly over the water.

Captain Swain pointed toward the island they were so swiftly approaching, and bade the girls remember that when the famous Liberty Pole was raised by the patriotic Americans of Martha's Vineyard, on Manter Hill, the women of the settlement had poured all the tea, on which Britain had demanded so unfair a tax, into the hole. "And three hundred men from Martha's Vineyard joined the American forces," added the old captain, as he recalled that this sister island of Nantucket had borne her share of the sacrifices and hardships of war; for twenty-six English cruisers, under Gray, in 1778, had made harbor here and pillaged the defenceless citizens, carrying off three hundred cattle and ten thousand sheep, and robbing the householders of food and clothing.

The sloop was now headed toward the lee of a high bluff, and Debby's glance scanned the shore hopefully, as if she expected to see her Indian friends come running to welcome her; but the rough pasture land, with here and there a bunch of scrubby oak or pine trees, stretched off without a sign of human habitation.

Captain Swain nodded encouragingly, however, as he swung his little granddaughter from

the bow of the sloop to a broad, flat rock that made a safe landing place. "The Noapogs have long ago seen us, Debby," he said, "but they will not let us see them until they discover our errand," and, bidding Edward take care of the luncheon basket, he helped Priscilla and Judith ashore, saying:

"'Tis too early for luncheon; we'll climb up the slope and take a look about," and at this Judy and Debby, who still carried her basket, darted off closely followed by Prissie, while the captain stopped to fill and light his pipe.

"Why do you not leave your basket with the others, Debby?" asked Judith, but Debby did not seem to hear the question, and at that moment a feathered arrow fell directly in front of them.

The three little girls stood perfectly still, surprised and half frightened at this unexpected greeting that seemed to fall out of the air, and that was instantly followed by two more arrows.

It was Priscilla who spoke first, and in so clear a tone that the others gazed at her in wonder:

"Arrows do not mean welcome to the friends of Sasapana and Askamopo!"

There was a little silence, as the girls stood

there afraid to take a step forward, but with no thought of calling to Captain Swain; and when, from behind a group of low-growing spruce trees, an Indian girl stepped out and stood with her sharp eyes fixed upon the visitors, Debby ran toward her exclaiming:

"Sasapana! Sasapana! Oh! I've been hoping and hoping to come and visit you! And here I am! And here is Priscilla! You remember us! And this is Judith Coleman! And we have come, as you asked us, to spend the day!" And Debby smiled as if confident that she had been eagerly expected.

For a moment the Indian girl did not speak, nor did her face show any sign of welcome, but gradually a smile crept over the brown face and she advanced a step, pointing to the basket.

"Presents?" she asked.

"Yes, indeed! For you and Askamopo!"

Before another word could be spoken the shrill call of a blue jay sounded so near at hand that the little group turned quickly to find a number of Indian girls close behind them, and, before the little white girls had time to think, they found themselves surrounded, and being gently but firmly pushed forward until they were hidden

behind the spruce trees from which Sasapana had appeared. Priscilla and Judith were held by the clasp of two Indian girls, and were so surprised and frightened that they did not notice that Sasapana and Debby had vanished from sight, and when at the sound of Captain Swain's voice, and of his approaching steps, the Indian girls disappeared, Judith and Priscilla stood looking at each other in amazement. It was Captain Swain who exclaimed:

"What's all this? Where is Deborah?"

"Oh! The Indian girls! They have carried her off!" declared Judith, and Priscilla quickly told of the arrows, and of the encounter that had followed.

Captain Swain listened quietly, and did not seem at all alarmed.

"Debby will be all right," he assured them. "She is Sasapana's guest, and will come to no harm. Let us go further up the hill," and calling to Edward to bring the lunch basket, the captain led the way to a gnarly old oak tree further up the slope, and bade the girls open the basket and take out the food.

"Debby will be with us before you know it, and the Indian girls with her. 'Tis but a game

they are playing," he said, and Prissie and Judy, noticing Edward's smiling face, and that the captain was not concerned by Debby's absence, were no longer alarmed, and began to wish that they, too, had been taken captives.

"Here they come!" whispered Edward, as he lifted a roasted chicken from the basket; "don't let them know you see them," but a small figure wearing a head-dress of bright feathers darted away from the approaching group, and Prissie called out: "It's Debby! It's Debby!" and a moment later Judy and Prissie were exclaiming in delight as Debby displayed the head-dress, declaring: "'Tis a present from Sasapana!"

For Debby's covered basket had been filled with spiced cakes and sugar cookies, that the delighted Indian girls had quickly devoured, and in return Sasapana had bestowed her dearest possession, the feather head-dress, upon her visitor.

The Indian girls, now smiling and friendly, were given a part of the generous luncheon Mrs. Swain had prepared, and later on led the way to the little village of wigwams where Captain Swain and Edward talked with the older members of the tribe, telling them that British ships

would no longer harass and alarm the helpless islanders, and that the great white chief, Washington, would henceforth protect them.

Sasapana kept close beside Debby, and Askamopo and several other girls led Prissie and Judy to the outskirts of the little settlement telling them stories of giant chiefs, of Indians who could talk with birds and animals, and of Moshup, the Indian giant, who had once lived in a cave in the bluff toward the sea, and who often caught a whale by its tail and swung it to his hearthstone where a fire constantly burned.

" 'Tis one of his moccasins, that he flung into the sea, that is Nantucket Island," declared Askamopo.

Meanwhile the squaws had busied themselves in preparing a feast for their visitors, and roasted clams, ducks cooked over a blazing fire, and crisp bread made of crushed corn, were set before them.

It was late in the afternoon when Captain Swain declared it was time to start for home. Their Indian friends went with them to the shore, and Prissie, Judy and Debby each carried a pretty basket of woven orange grass that their friends had given them. From the bow of the

sloop they waved their good-byes until, rounding the point, they could no longer be seen.

The golden rays of the setting sun were reflected from the windows of the Sherburne houses as the sloop swung about and slid smoothly to its berth beside the long wharf.

"Are you not glad you are not in Boston, Judy?" questioned Prissie, after they had thanked Captain Swain, and bade Debby good-bye, and were walking up the street toward Judy's home.

Judy nodded smilingly, as her thoughts flew back to the time when she had believed Priscilla to be a messenger for the Tories, remembering all Priscilla's courage, for Edward had not failed to tell his sister that: "'Twas Prissie and the east wind that saved Nantucket from the English cruisers."

But Judy's smiling nod was all the response Priscilla needed as the two girls walked happily on, knowing that the ships of a dangerous foe no longer hovered about their island home.

THE END